LITTLE SMOKE

by

WILLIAM O. STODDARD

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Little Smoke.

LITTLE SMOKE

A TALE OF THE SIOUX

BY

WILLIAM O. STODDARD
AUTHOR OF CROWDED OUT O' CROFIELD, ETC.

WITH 14 FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS AND 72 HEAD AND TAIL PIECES DRAWN BY FREDERIC S. DELLENBAUGH

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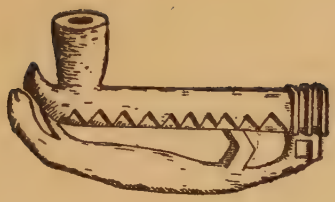
PREFACE.

In reply to inquiries which have been made by readers of the earlier editions of Little Smoke, the author wishes to say that all the facts made use of have been gathered and verified with great care. Original official reports and maps have been freely consulted. The Indian chiefs named were real characters, and so were most of the white men. The fights described were actually fought, and but little variation has been made in even the location of camps or mines. An effort has been made to give a fair, truthful idea of Indian life, thoughts, customs, traditions, and superstitions, as they are among the tribes mentioned in the story. They are rapidly changing rather than passing away, and a sufficient knowledge of what they now are and have been should be acquired by all young Americans. Historical value, therefore, has been aimed at in making use of the realities which so greatly surpass any possible fiction.

W. O. S.

New York, 1893.



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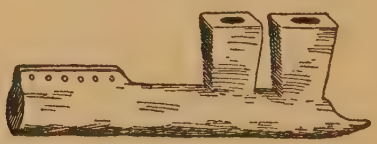


LITTLE SMOKE.

CHAPTER I.

THE BLUE TELEGRAM.

"Ugh! Where boy gone? Burnt Face know?"

No squaw would have presumed to employ precisely that tone and manner in speaking to an Indian warrior. The man who lay upon the grass, however, with a pipe in his mouth, did not belong to her own race. She was Rain-all-day, the great medicine-squaw of No-ton-thah's band of Ogalallahs. He was her own son-in-law, and yet no amount of tan, and sunburn, and Indian dress could hide the fact that at some time or other he had been a white man. He had then been known as Dick Wall, but he was now Burnt Face, an Ogalallah by formal adoption.

Nevertheless, he could be spoken to, by some persons, almost scornfully, since he had become altogether a renegade from one race without acquiring absolutely perfect membership in the other. That is,

when he married the daughter of Rain-all-day and so became what the plainsmen call a "squaw-man," his mother-in-law still retained her born right to hate and despise all that was pale-face in him. There did not, indeed, seem to be a great deal of that sort of thing visible just now. Perhaps it was her hatred of all white men in general, rather than of him in particular, which expressed itself in her face and in the harsh tones of her voice. She repeated her inquiry, using a number of rough Sioux syllables this time, and something he did not like was among them, for there was a kind of ill-tempered perverseness in the manner in which he replied to her: "Which boy do you mean? There's your Ath-poh-goh. Can't you see him?"

He pointed at a fat, contented-looking young savage who was sitting upon an old ant-hill and seemed to be sunning himself. He was about sixteen years of age, apparently, and his face was daubed with red and yellow ochre; his hair was tied up with a strip from the same old red blanket which had supplied him with a waist-cloth, and it was every way manifest that he was proud of himself.

Ath-poh-goh was a grandson of Rain-all-day, but she may not have been as proud of him as he was

of himself, to judge by the somewhat vigorous "Ugh!" with which she looked away from him, as if she were hunting for somebody she liked better. The squaw-man had known very well that this was the case. There was even a twinkle of malicious fun in his gray eyes as he now pointed easterly and said to her: "Boy away down river. Gone hunting. Stay a week, may be. Come back then and scalp old woman."

"Ugh!" remarked Rain-all-day, once more. "Boy heap hunt. Great chief one day. Heap kill. Lodge all time full of meat. Great brave. Scalp Crow. Scalp heap mean pale-face."

"Guess she's right about that," muttered Burnt Face, as she turned away. "What the little wolf doesn't know, for his age, and for the schoolin' he's had, isn't worth knowing. He'll get himself knocked on the head, though, mighty early. He'll go for too many scalps at a time, just as his father did. Oh, but isn't she an awful old woman?"

The last remark went with a significant nod after his tall mother-in-law, who was now walking dignifiedly toward her own lodge, at a little distance from the one before which Burnt Face was loafing. She was gaunt but not slender; she was thin and dark,

and as straight as an arrow, and her black eyes had a searching brilliancy like those of a hawk. She muttered to herself, walking or standing still, almost unceasingly, so that any listener could have imagined how the gloomy cloud upon her face, and the continual patter, patter of her restless tongue, had earned for her such a very uncommon but expressive name.

As for the squaw-man, some untimely going off of a lot of gunpowder had made so many blue-black spots upon his countenance that his wife's relations had experienced no difficulty whatever in inventing an Ogalallah name for him. He had found much more in learning to pronounce the string of Sioux syllables which were to be interpreted, "The-man-whose-face-has-had-fire-kindled-all-over-it," but that was at the beginning, and he could now speak his adopted language reasonably well.

There were more than two dozen lodges, irregularly scattered along the westerly bank of Powder River that summer morning. Among them all there were none more respectable in appearance than those of Rain-all-day and her son-in-law. Her husband had been a great chief, and she was herself no ordinary squaw. Her family was not likely to suffer

under her supervision, even if, as Burnt Face asserted, her oldest grandson, Ath-poh-goh, had taken entirely to paint, laziness, and eating.

The hunting upon the upper waters of the Powder River was in those good days the best in all the world. It could, however, be enjoyed by Indians only, for they had jealously reserved that country to themselves in all the treaties which they had yet made with the Government of the United States. There was also an abundance of very good fighting to be had there, at times, by almost anybody and without any help from Government. As for both hunting and fighting, however, the buffalo and the other game, and the red men themselves, were far more numerous on Powder River, in that day, than they are now or ever will be again.

No-ton-thah's band was camped upon the traditional hunting-ground of the Sioux nation, but every member of it was well aware that a similar right to hunt in that region was claimed by the Crows also, and by the Cheyennes.

The very name Ogalallah means "Wanderer," and the several Sioux bands to whom it is applied have earned it well. They have won a reputation as the very wildest of all untamed red men. Up to

that time they had persistently maintained their right to come and go upon the face of the earth at their own will. They would settle upon no "reservation," and they claimed and were ready to fight hard for all the lands from which they or their forefathers had ever driven away any other kind of Indians. They were about ten thousand in number, and their chiefs were warriors whose names will be remembered as long as anybody takes an interest in studying the romantic story of the wild tribes of the West.

No-ton-thah's band was not large, it was only a branch of the red clan which obeyed the general orders of Ta-tan-ka-yo-tan-kah, or Sitting Bull; but his opinion of himself as a great and wise chief was by no means contracted. If it could have been rolled out thin, it would have covered an entire red nation, ponies and all. Large as it was he could honestly explain to himself, or another man, that he deserved it fairly well. At that present moment he was exhibiting his accustomed war and hunting wisdom, for he was about to ask for advice. He would not, for a pony, have confessed to any other warrior a purpose of taking counsel of a mere squaw, even if she bore the high reputation of being a witch

and was named Rain-all-day; but then he was in serious doubt about a very important matter, and it weighed upon his mind. It affected the temporary comfort and, perhaps, the future prosperity of the entire band.

He and his had already remained longer in the Powder River country than it was natural for an Ogalallah to linger anywhere. Their stay bore a faint and far-away resemblance to something like actual settling down, and so it was beginning to fill his mind with dark forebodings. The hunting had been very good, except that no large droves of bisons had been encountered, but it was time for him and his people to "wander." Still, it was desirable that they should wander away from danger and into the neighborhood of abundant buffalo-beef. Migrating herds of wild cattle might even then be on their way toward his present camping-ground, and he was undecided whether statesmanship required him to go or to stay. In such a perplexity of mind he could not but consider the fact that he had at his elbow, so to speak, a great medicine-squaw of his own, and that Rain-all-day sometimes dreamed the most remarkably successful dreams. So he had come to see her, but he was not at all bound to say so. In a moment

more they were standing face to face, and she knew exactly what he had come for. She looked him steadily in the eyes while he made a commonplace remark about the matter, and then she replied to the question which he had not asked.

"Bad medicine! Ugh!" she exclaimed.

"How bad medicine?" he inquired, with what was meant to be a smile of utter indifference to anything which could be uttered by a woman. "Old squaw have bad dream? Ugh!"

Rain-all-day's lips moved silently for a moment, and then she said: "Ugh! No-ton-thah heap large eye. Put blanket over it. Not see blue-coat come till he ride into Ogalallah camp."

"No blue-coat ever in Powder River country!" exclaimed the chief, sharply. "No come. Rain-all-day heap lie. Heap dream. How she know?"

He knew very well that she was too wise to have made so astounding an assertion without some reasonable ground for it, but the idea was beyond probabilities, and he could not accept it all at once.

"Ugh!" said Rain-all-day. "Great chief pull blanket from his eyes. Look! Look long time. See blue-coat come?"

She lifted her long, sinewy right arm, and

"Look!" said Rain-all-Day.

pointed at something in the distance, down the river.

Fierce grunts burst from the lips of the astonished chief, as he strained his keen eyes in the direction indicated by his squaw counselor. Only vision like that of an eagle could have discovered anything but the clear, blue sky above the sharp outlines of the craggy heights which bordered the valley. Rain-all-day had seen something, however, at the moment when she turned away from talking to Burnt Face, and it had brought to her a message which she had read and understood. No-on-thah saw it, now that his attention was called to it, but he had not noticed it before. He stood and gazed in dignified silence, and he also read but did not perfectly understand.

The signal in the sky which now so utterly absorbed them both seemed to come repeatedly, and to hover over the summit of one of the rocky pinnacles. It was as if it were made again and again, to prevent mistakes, although with some variations, and the old medicine-squaw translated its meaning as readily as any white lady might interpret that of a pot-hook letter from one of her boys at boarding-school. No-ton-thah was too proud to directly ask any explanation from Rain-all-day. She knew that, and so of

her own accord she read the message aloud to him. He gave her some side glances of almost superstitious respect while she liberally filled up what must have been a very bare outline. She described to him an affair which nobody in that camp could see, and which nobody else professed to be witnessing, and she went into an extraordinary minuteness of description.

Nearly an hour before that consultation took place in No-ton-thah's camp, and miles away northward, down the bank of the winding river, although not nearly so many miles measured in a straight line, there had been something which it would have been well worth the chief's while to have seen with his own eyes.

There was a dense clump of bushes at a place where the mountainous ridge, westward, sent down a rugged finger to within a short distance of the water's edge. The bushes were high and closely grown, making a capital ambush, and in among them stood a boy about fourteen years of age. He was a first-rate type of a young Ogalallah, well-shaped, broad-shouldered, very dark, with an aquiline nose and intensely black eyes. His face bore a strong resemblance to that of Rain-all-day, and he seemed

to be the very sort of boy to deserve such a grandmother. At the present moment his eyes were glittering with fierce excitement, and his entire attitude and manner were strikingly suggestive of a panther getting ready for a spring upon approaching game. He was naked from the waist upward, and it could be seen that his well-developed muscles appeared to be working in a kind of tense and eager sympathy with whatever was stirring in his mind. The belt which held up his fringed leggings carried also a sheath with a good bowie-knife in it, and he had a serviceable-looking bow and arrows. He was an altogether untamed, untamable, irreclaimable Wanderer of the Sioux, and for that very reason he was an exceedingly interesting young fellow. What was more, just now he was a boy who had received and profited by an uncommonly good and thorough education, as he was about to prove.

He had abundant reason for his extraordinary excitement. Up along the river-bank riding four abreast, with scouts ahead of them, and with four loaded, tilted wagons bringing up the rear, rode two full companies of United States cavalry. They were evidently well equipped and in excellent condition, and they moved almost as if they had been on pa-

rade. That meant, to a military eye, that their commander considered himself in an enemy's country and in momentary peril of an attack for which he proposed to be in a state of constant preparation.

He was nearly enough right about it, and any carelessness on his part might easily have resulted in his throwing away the lives of his command. He and they had no right to be there, under existing treaties. According to Indian notions, they were nothing less than an invading army, a trespassing war-party of wicked white men. They had received orders, however, to explore the Powder River country, and here they were, exploring it, far beyond reenforcement or support, with a certainty that the natural idea of every Ogalallah they might meet would be that they had come upon an errand of mischief to him and to his people.

The Ogalallah boy now gazing out from his ambush regarded the cavalry as his hereditary enemies and as decidedly the most ruthless of all possible invaders. He understood at once that if they should ride fast enough they might reach the camp of No-ton-thah before any warning could be given, and might murder the entire band, or carry it off into imprisonment upon some reservation. He nevertheless

looked upon the gallant array with undisguised admiration. He listened, for the first time in his life and wonderingly, to the mellow bugle-notes of command which came ringing through the clear air as they drew nearer. He listened, but every vindictive line of his expressive young face declared with what intensity he hated and dreaded that brilliant war-party of pale-face braves. He had been taught, from infancy, that he was born to hate them and to fight them, for they intended to rob him and his of all the game and all the land, and to either kill him or turn him into a squaw and compel him to hoe corn.

The cavalry were now so near that the Indian boy crouched upon all-fours for better concealment, and his new attitude increased the panther-like expression with which he had glared upon his enemies.

The jingling sabers and the heavily rumbling wheels went slowly by. The scout upon that side gazed listlessly into the bushes without detecting the lurking watcher. The bugle sounded once more, and, as its music died away, the young Sioux sprang to his feet and darted back toward the ridge. Not many rods farther, he passed a nook from which a tethered pony neighed to him, but he did not pause, except to pick up, here and there, a fragment of

birchbark or of very dry moss and some knots of pitch-pine. He was gathering his pens and ink for an important letter that he was about to write to his grandmother, Rain-all-day, and he was in a tremendous hurry.

He had some steep climbing before him, for he had selected a writing-table, and it was on the summit of a very tall pinnacle of blue sandstone, that towered above the surrounding crags, as if it had been set up especially for a signal station. On the side toward the river it was nearly perpendicular, but on the opposite face the slope was broken and more gradual. Even there, however, it was a terrible ascent for a boy with such a shoulder-load of mountain "stationery." It would have been tough work for most boys, white or red, without any burden whatever. Here and there the narrow ledges, along beetling precipices, would have tried unsteady nerves severely; but the young Indian seemed to be as destitute of fear as of fatigue. He made his upward way without one moment of hesitation, and with not many breathing-spells.

It was wonderful in how short a time he reached the summit of that baldheaded knob. He threw down his bundle and stood for half a minute

gazing away up the river at the slender column of blue-coated horsemen, while his dark face gleamed with an expression of triumphant bitterness. Somehow or other he had gained, or was about to gain, a victory over the armies of the United States, so far as those two companies of cavalry were concerned. He was busy at it in a moment, and he showed himself an expert with flint, and steel, and tinder. There was hardly any wind stirring on that giddy height, and very quickly a thin pillar of black, pitch-pine smoke arose from it. He stood and watched the pillar for full five minutes, and then he took off his buckskin leggings to use them as a fan in working variations in that smoke-signal. It would almost disappear when he covered the small blaze for a moment, or when he beat it almost out with a piece of birchbark. Then its columns would quiver and veer as he fanned it vigorously with the leggings. Then, as he rapidly added all his remaining fuel, it grew black and dense, and went up strongly, until he suddenly kicked it all away from the rock and it was gone. He neither knew nor cared that the watchful commander of the cavalry had replied to a younger officer, riding by him: "Do I see that smoke, eh? Yes, it means mis-

chief. The redskins are signaling. There are hunting-parties of 'em all through the valley."

"They've managed, so far," said the younger officer, "to keep out of our way. Perhaps they're not hostile."

"Well, yes, captain, perhaps. But then, if they should gather and wipe us all out, we'd never know the difference. I'm glad we can turn about and go down the river to-morrow. We've gone far enough to comply with our instructions."

There was a look of relief on the captain's face when he heard that, but at the same moment the Ogalallah signal-boy, away up on the rock, seemed to be anxious about something. He needed not to have been so. His warning had been seen and understood. His grandmother had read that strange letter all the more accurately because she herself had taught him how to write it with smoke.

When the end came, there was no name signed to it at all, but No-ton-thah exclaimed: "Ugh! Blue-coat come. Not find Ogalallah here. Boy make great chief one day. Little Smoke tell."

The Indian families have no family names, and each member obtains one as fast as he or she may. Rain-all-day turned toward her lodge, muttering as

usual, but every now and then repeating the not unmusical Sioux words which had fallen from the lips of the chief, "Little Smoke tell."

If that were indeed to be his name, the boy himself had finished writing smoke-letters, for that time, and was rapidly climbing down from the knob. He reached the ground and was quickly mounted upon his pony. He glanced eagerly up and down the valley, on riding out of the bushes, but none of the dreaded pale-face horsemen were in sight. He felt all over like a warrior, to be there alone, with a cavalry force between him and his camp. He rode along the river-bank, intently studying the swift and muddy current. It was not a wide stream, but it did not look as if there were any ford in that neighborhood. The next best thing to a ford was a place that seemed to be clear of snags and eddies, so that a boy or a pony could safely swim across. Just such a place was found, and then the Ogalallah boy sent a whoop of defiance after the vanished cavalry.

In he plunged, swinging from the pony's back as soon as he was beyond his depth, and guiding him skillfully as the current bore them down-stream. It was a vigorous pull, but the pony did his part as well as his young master did his, and it was not long

before they were both upon firm ground on the easterly side of the Powder River. They went ashore among dense trees and thickets, and it was well for them that they did so.

Cautiously and watchfully Little Smoke led his pony through to the farther edge of the line of forest, and then he peered out into the open country beyond, as a fellow might whose entire training and experience had taught him to guard against surprises. He found one, now, for once more he had something before him that was pretty well worth seeing—for him. Half a mile or so up-stream arose the peaks of a dozen lodges. Nearer, so near that he could almost have sent an arrow among them, rode a party of red braves.

"Ugh!" he exclaimed, as he drew quickly back into the thickest cover, for an encampment of Crows, the hereditary enemies of his tribe, was as bad a thing to find between him and his grandmother as was even a company of cavalry. It was beginning to look as if Little Smoke's chances for getting home early and in safety were diminishing in a very exciting and unpleasant way indeed.

CHAPTER II.

BERT RAYNOR'S ROMANCE.

"I WONDER what the folks at home would say, if they could see this!"

A miner's cabin, or "shack," built of stones and mud and roofed with bark, stood near the bank of a clear and deep but narrow river. Between the shack and the river stood a white boy who could not yet have seen his fifteenth birthday. His hair and eyes were black, and his complexion was very dark. It was ruddy with health, however, and his face glowed with animation and intelligence. He was the very boy to have read books of adventure, and to have had wild dreams of fighting Indians and wild animals and of mining for gold. So he was just the boy to have come West on a visit to a gold-mining uncle, and to have joined him on a prospecting expedition into the Black Hills.

There he was now, near the western border of the very region considered by the Sioux and some

other tribes as most sacred from pale-face intrusion. Hundreds of other miners poured into it that year, to the great wrath of the red men.

"Some day or other," said the boy, after a moment of silence, "I mean to write a story, and call it 'Bert Raynor among the Black Hills.' There was hard work in getting here, but there'd be nothing to ask for now if Uncle Jake and Bill Adams didn't quarrel so. Bill's the contrariest, most dissatisfied fellow I ever saw. Uncle Jake? Well, I guess he'd be satisfied with 'most anything for about two weeks."

Perhaps that remark was called out by the sound of half-angry voices which came from a ledge of rocks a couple of hundred yards up the slope. There was a small beginning of a mine there, and two men had been picking away industriously all the morning, while Bert had "kept house" for them. A tilted wagon stood near the shack, and Bert's duties included the care of six good mules who were feeding on the rich pasture at a little distance. The responsibility of getting dinner for all hands also belonged to Bert, and he now carried in his hand a stout bass-rod ready for use. The scenery he had been admiring was magnificent, from the green grass

of the valley to the grand fronts and summits of the mountains, but he had to turn away from it and think of fish.

"I wonder," he said aloud, "what I'm going to catch this time? Uncle Jake says he means to lay up a pile of smoked fish for next winter, but you'll see he won't do it."

The river-bank was thickly fringed with trees and bushes, but a space had been cleared away near the cabin, and Bert had plenty of fishing-room.

"They'll bite a grasshopper," he said, "quicker'n they will worms or pork."

He was right about it. The large, green 'hopper he had hidden his hook with hardly touched the water before it was seized. There came a rush, a plunge, and then a jerk, which brought the line spinning from the reel.

"No catfish ever bit like that!" shouted Bert. "Hurrah!"

He seemed to know how to handle his rod and line, and there was no use in trying to pull that fish right in with light tackle. The vigorous game made dashes in all directions, and kept Bert's reel busy for some time before showing any signs of weariness. Then at last, slowly, steadily, persistently, it was

drawn to the bank. One cautious lift, and a noble-looking fish was out upon the grass.

"Trout!" exclaimed Bert. "He must be a six-pounder."

That was very near for a fisherman's first guess, as it was only about two pounds too much. The heaviest fish, including the fish that get away, are those which are never weighed.

"That's all we'll need for dinner," said Bert, "but I'm going to put on a heavier line and try again."

The hook was larger, also, and required a pair of very fat and dignified-looking grasshoppers to disguise it. Out went the cast, but no fish came splashing to the surface. Down, down, down, went the bait, until suddenly Bert felt a heavy, dull tug.

"No trout," said Bert, "but a snag wouldn't try to get away. It's pulling hard."

So he found in another half-minute, but there were no sharp and sudden jerks. It was needful to give line, and humor that strangely pulling fish. There were intervals of "sulking," when he could be drawn almost in, and then he would arouse himself and flounder away with fresh energy. He used up more time than even the trout had required, and

when, at last, he too, in his turn, came to the margin and was carefully hauled out and landed, Bert Raynor's eyes opened widely.

"Catfish!" he exclaimed. "Well, I've caught dozens of 'em, right here, but I never saw such a fellow as this is."

Nevertheless, although that "blue cat" weighed twenty pounds, he was not uncommonly large for his kind. They often reach twenty-five pounds. The smaller catfish which Bert had caught before were of another variety common to the rivers of that region. They were "lady cat" fish, and do not often weigh over two or three pounds. Bert looked at his prizes and felt like trying for more, but he was not fishing for the fun of it. He lifted one in each hand, remarking: "Uncle Jake and Bill Adams can eat more fish! Well, I can do my share, but they keep one a-cookin'. A whole deer doesn't last long. You can cut steaks from that catfish and fry 'em."

Catfish steaks were not likely to be equal to broiled trout, but a Black Hills miner gets up an appetite which calls for liberal supplies and is not too particular. By the time Bert Raynor had cleaned his fish, and stirred up his fire, and made coffee, and was ready to broil and fry, two hungry men came

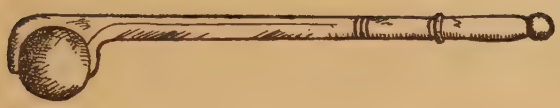
walking slowly along from the "claim," arguing about something all the way.

"It's no use, Bill," said the man on the right. "The prospect is first rate, and I'm going to stay, for a while, anyhow."

He was a broad-shouldered, light-haired, blue-eyed man, with a face that was a queer mixture of obstinacy and good-nature.

"There's sure to be better luck, the farther you go," insisted the other man. "Anyhow, I'm hungry, now. We'll talk it over again."

He looked hungry, and he had a mouth and nose and eyes that seemed to be looking around and searching for something they had not found or that was better than anything they had on hand. He was just the man with just the face to be dissatisfied with any "claim," or any cup of coffee, or any kind of fish, and he even found fault with Bert Raynor's trout and wished he had a slice of catfish. That was where Bert trapped him, for he at once went out behind the "shack" and cut a slice of that blue cat and cooked it, and Bill Adams was compelled to admit that on the whole he would rather have trout "if it was rightly broiled, my boy."



CHAPTER III.

LITTLE SMOKE AS A HORSE-THIEF.

Away off on the bank of the Powder River, Little Smoke prowled among the bushes, watching the Crows and their encampment and waiting patiently for night to come. He felt that he was on a sort of war-path, and sincerely hoped that the covert he was in might prove "good medicine" for him and his pony. He had a born and bred contempt for Crows, but he knew that they could fight hard and would surely finish him if they caught him. Just so surely would it be "bad medicine" for them to meet No-ton-thah and his warriors in that valley, among the best hunting-grounds of the Sioux. Little Smoke was well aware that the Manitou, or guardian spirit, of Powder River was favorable to all Ogalallahs, and that there was nothing really against him except Crow watchfulness and cunning.

In all such matters he had been educated by Rain-all-day. She had taught him the wild legends

which she so continually muttered to herself. From her he had learned the ways and dwelling-places of the manitous and the stirring traditions of his great nation, and of the deeds of its mighty warriors. As for himself, he knew that he should, some time or other, go to the happy hunting-grounds if he became a brave and successful warrior, and did not get himself killed in the dark or hanged. All good Oga lallah braves would get there, and many Cheyennes, but few Arapahoes or Crows, and no pale-faces at all.

He felt more and more sure that his signal on the knob must have been seen, and, if so, that the camp of No-ton-thah was deserted long before the blue-coated horsemen could get there.

Little Smoke had done his duty and was proud of it. He was proud, too, to be hiding there watching his enemies. The pony fed well all the afternoon, but his master was compelled to go hungry. He would, however, have despised himself or any other boy so weak-minded as to be troubled about so small a matter-of-course as that. He did not give it a thought, but he watched the sun go down with eyes which were beginning to glitter again as they had done when he was studying the cavalry.

There was no moon that night, and Little Smoke had all the help which darkness could give him when he led his pony out from the line of timber. Slowly and cautiously he guided the faithful animal toward the outskirts of the Crow encampment, on the side farthest from the river, letting him browse his way along, and keeping himself carefully hidden behind him.

It was daring and exciting work. It went on until that solitary Sioux pony seemed to stray in of his own accord among a large drove of Crow ponies. These had been corraled for the night under the care of sentinels who were not keeping a very good watch. Before long, two Crow ponies had made a close acquaintance with their Ogalallah visitor, and began to walk slowly along with him.

Little Smoke could keep himself more perfectly concealed by the bodies of three ponies than by one, and during all that time not a solitary Crow warrior on guard suspected that such a fellow was anywhere around.

He was feeling more and more like a brave on his first war-path. Next to the actual taking of scalps, he had been taught to consider the successful stealing of horses one of the first duties and glories

of an ambitious Ogalallah boy. Here he was, therefore, in the heart of a hostile camp, following out the precepts of his honored grandmother. A slight mist arose from the river and drifted across the valley toward the hills. Under cover of it, three ponies were joined by another, and then all four moved along a little more rapidly. The country was open, and there was no need of searching for any road. Crow sentinels and pickets could not be posted everywhere. Such as were on duty were aware that most of the horses of the band were "pegged out" to long lariats, and they had no thought of how easily a Sioux boy getting in among them could pull up a lariat peg. Deeper hung the mist, and faster walked the ponies, now that there was less peril from any sound which their feet might make. A mile was passed in safety, and then another, and at last Little Smoke sprang upon the back of his own pony. At that very moment a wild yell broke forth in the Crow encampment. Whoop followed whoop, and every warrior of that hunting party seized his weapons and sprang out, ready for whatever might be coming.

Nothing of any sort was coming, but they quickly understood that three ponies were gone, lariats

and all, with one fine bridle. Some uncommonly expert and daring enemy had been right in among them. Nobody could guess whence he had come, or in what direction he had led away his prizes. Even the bravest warriors shook their heads, and talked bitterly about Ogalallahs. They did not know how many they might run against if they rode out in the dark, and so they remained in camp, feeling that the Powder River country was a dangerous hunting-ground for Crows.

WLen all the startled hunting party whooped and yelled over the discovered theft of the three ponies, Little Smoke was two long miles away, and did not hear the noise. He did not know that his exploit had been found out, but he was not to escape without one more exciting adventure. June nights are short, and this was nearly gone. The gray of the dawn would soon be upon the mountains, and the young Sioux horse-thief knew that danger might come with it as it should creep down into the valley. One danger did come just a little before the dawn.

The picket duty assigned to one lonely Crow brave had compelled him to spend that night on horseback. He had done so with many thoughts in his mind concerning Cheyennes and Arapahoes, and,

worst of all perils to a Crow, those most evil-minded of Sioux, the Ogalallahs. When, however, he now heard the sound of hoofs coming from the direction of his own camp, he thought only of friendly riders, and wheeled his pony to meet them.

Little Smoke had been keenly on the lookout for some such night rider as that Crow, in the way of his escape with his ponies. He had ridden, bow in hand, ready for any emergency. It came to him suddenly, but the picket was surprised, and not Little Smoke. Shrill and clear rang out the Ogalallah war-whoop as he drew an arrow to the head, keeping right onward at full gallop. Louder, hoarser, deeper, but with a startled shake in it, came back the war-cry of the Arickaras—the Crows. It was clipped short and changed into an angry yell, for the bow twanged and the lance dropped from the right hand of the picket. The arrow had gone through his arm, just above the elbow, and he dashed away among the shadows at the best speed his pony had in him. When he reached camp his friends pulled out the arrow for him, and heard him tell a thrilling story of a Sioux war-party of unknown number which he had desperately encountered in the dark. That story fitted well with the

He drew an arrow to the head.

loss of the three ponies. By daybreak every Crow lodge was down, for a hasty retreat out of the bad neighborhood of Powder River.

Little Smoke's warrior blood was up, but he had not lost all his prudence. He picked up the lance for a trophy and rode proudly on. He did not pause when daylight came, nor until he had reached a point just across the river from the place which had been the camping-ground of No-ton-thah's band.

Not an Indian lodge remained there, now, but less than a quarter of a mile farther up the river arose the white tents of the cavalry.

CHAPTER IV.

BERT RAYNOR'S RANCH.

Uncle Jake Raynor and Bill Adams were mining partners, and their hands were full of a mine concerning which both of them had doubts. They were unable to doubt both at once, and so whenever one of them abused the mine it was sure to be defended by the other. Whenever Jake failed to find any gold, Bill was sure to see favorable signs; and when Bill himself got blue, it was turn about.

At all times there was an abundance of work for two men at the claim, and they were glad to leave everything else to Bert Raynor, so that his hands were very nearly as full as theirs were. One important matter which fell to his share was the duty of keeping up a perpetual watch upon the surrounding country. He was both scout and patrol, as well as hunter and fisherman, but it was not necessary for him to go very far from the "shack." He had used his eyes diligently and so had Uncle Jake and Bill,

and neither of them had seen anything as yet to shake his firm conviction that they were all alone in that part of the Indian country.

They were thinking only of white men and red men; but, if Bert had been acquainted with Rain-all-day, she could have told him why the Indian tribes which claimed the Black Hills rarely went into them, except upon brief hunting expeditions. They never wintered there nor made a home for any long time among such valleys as would otherwise have attracted them. The Black Hills were too thickly inhabited already, according to Indian belief. All the gloomy ranges, the forests, and the prairies, were to them a haunted land, uncomfortably crowded with invisible beings. Multitudes of Manitous had their abode there, and some of them were powerful if not actually vicious. There was a sort of sacredness about such a country, and the red men valued it hardly less because they were making but little use of it. Around it, in several directions, lay the desolate ruggedness of the "Bad Lands," making it difficult to get into, as many a party of cavalry or of miners were ready to testify.

Bert Raynor was a boy all over, and there were all sorts of thrill and excitement in riding to and fro

as a genuine scout watching for real Indians. He had planned and decided upon quite a number of daring feats which he would surely perform in case he should fall in with hostile savages. He was a pretty good shot, and had kept the camp-fire as well supplied with deer-meat as with fish. That was an important matter, for he had enabled the two miners to work right along without disturbing the stock of provisions they had brought in the tilted wagon.

Nothing had occurred, up to that day, to check Bert's enthusiasm, and it bubbled over pretty steadily. Perhaps he mentioned the most important defect in the situation when he remarked: "Uncle Jake, don't I wish there was a post-office handy? I'd like to write home and tell 'em all about it."

"Well, yes," said Uncle Jake, "no doubt they'd like to hear, but they won't be uneasy. They know you're off in the mines, somewhere, and they won't be looking for letters right away."

"I'd write to them," said Bert, "and I'd write to the newspapers."

"Cords of fellers are writin' to all of 'em, Bert," said his uncle. "There's a swarm of new settlers a-pouring in on the east side of the Black Hills and up north. That's the reason I didn't want to come

by the old army trail. The crowd'll be here by spring, and I'm glad we've got so good a claim staked out."

He looked up and down the valley with a self-satisfied air as he spoke, but Bill Adams was not within hearing distance just then.

Bill never had been satisfied in all his life, and he was not by any means satisfied now. To be sure, there was gold here, but Uncle Jake said so too often, and then there might be more of it somewhere else, and Bill was growing more and more hungry for that other gold. He had opened his mind upon the subject already, vehemently; and now, as day followed day, he urged Uncle Jake again and again to put the mules to the wagon and push along. He got angry at last and stormed about it, and that was just the way to stir up all the obstinacy that showed so plainly in Jake Raynor's good-natured face. He owned the greater part of that outfit, and he would not budge. He said so with pretty good temper, as a rule, until one morning, when he replied to Bill a little too positively: "Now, Bill Adams, I've heard enough. If you're bound to go, just take what belongs to you and trudge along. I'm going to stay here."

"All right," said Bill, "that's exactly what I'll do. I'll pack two of them mules."

Bert had nothing to say in such a matter as that, and he was weary of the long dispute. Uncle Jake looked on, in obstinate silence, while Bill proceeded with his preparations for departure. He caught two of the mules, saddled one of them, and packed them both with such tools, provisions, and other matters as fairly belonged to him. While he was doing that he grew redder and redder in the face, as an angry man will when he is having his own way and knows that it is not a good way. When it was done, he suddenly exclaimed, "Now I'm going to have my sheer of that there wagon."

"Go ahead," said Uncle Jake.—"You keep your mouth shut, Bert." So they both did while Bill took off one of the fore-wheels of the wagon and trundled it along to the spot where his mules were waiting for him.

"Good-by, Bill," shouted Uncle Jake. "Good luck to you. Hope you'll find a placer and a lode."

"Good-by, Bill," shouted Bert, but only a hoarse rumble came back to them. Bill Adams was sulkily angry, and knew that he was doing a useless piece of meanness, so he had nothing to say, but he went on.

A strange parting.

"That ruins the wagon, Uncle Jake," remarked Bert, dolefully.

"Guess not," replied he, quickly. "Bill has tossed up his rights to this here claim. It's ours as soon as he is out of sight, by mining law."

"But that wheel," said Bert.

"It isn't any bicycle. He can't ride it, nohow. It'll roll along with him till he gets over his fit. "I'll follow on his trail to-morrow and fetch it back again. We sha'n't lose any wheel."

"Guess not," said Bert, but for all that he felt badly about the wagon, and remembered that six mules had not been more pulling power than had been needed, quite a number of times, on the road which they had followed into the Black Hills.

Nevertheless, the taking of that wheel was a matter of great importance in its consequences. Uncle Jake did not set off after it till the next morning, but he went, leaving Bert Raynor in sole charge of the camp and of three mules. He said that the one he rode would soon have a wheel on him instead of behind him. He did not know how soon after getting away it had occurred to Bill Adams that one of his own mules could carry that thing better than he could trundle it.

At all events, a first result was that Bert Raynor ate his dinner alone, and it was altogether the strangest meal he had ever eaten. He knew that no other white boy in all the world was situated precisely as he was at that hour.

CHAPTER V.

A VERY YOUNG RAIDER.

Days and days before Bill Adams rolled away the wheel, Little Smoke reined in his pony on the easterly bank of Powder River. He carried the lance he had captured, and beside him stood the three Crow ponies that were now to be Ogalallah ponies. Across the river were the white tents of the cavalry, and the question in the mind of Little Smoke was, "Where are No-ton-thah and the band?"

It seemed a hard question to find an answer for, but he at once set himself at work to obtain one. He knew of a very good ford, a few miles farther up the river, but right here it was deep, and ran slowly, and was not too wide for an easy swim. He concealed his ponies in the woods half a mile away, and then stealthily returned to the bank of the river. He laid aside his lance and bow and arrows, took off his leggings, and was ready. He had cut a large

bush of willow, and now he carried it with him when he slipped into the water. Any cavalry patrol on the other shore would have seen only something green which did not float down-stream. It did not come straight across, for it was a well-guided bush, but before a great while it seemed to lodge among some other willows under the western bank.

Little Smoke crept out of the water into very good cover. His glittering black eyes danced in all directions as he made his way to a point from which he could look out upon the vacant camping-ground of his own band. There was a great idea in his mind. Rain-all-day had many a time recounted to him the exploits of Ta-tan-ka-yo-tan-kah, or Sitting Bull, the war-chief of the Ogalallahs, and Little Smoke was burning to imitate them if an opportunity should come.

Not a soldier was in sight, but down went the young adventurer, and his head did not rise above the weeds again until he was near the spot on which had stood the lodge of Rain-all-day. Some risk had to be taken now, and he sprang to his feet, eagerly searching the ground as if he expected to find something.

He was looking in that post-office for a letter

from his grandmother, and it was there. Little Smoke knew at once that it had been left there for him. A straight, deep scratch had been made across the ground which had been covered by the lodge. At one end of that mark two small, dry bones, pressed into the ground, rudely imitated an arrow-head, as some side marks at the other end imitated feathering. The entire arrow pointed up and across the river, to tell Little Smoke in what direction the band had gone.

"Ugh!" said he. "Rain-all-day saw smoke. No-ton-thah cross river. Go into hills."

If some stones beyond the head of the arrow indicated "hills," there must also have been a meaning in some horns scattered among them, for Little Smoke remarked, "Buffalo," as he looked and studied. Then he suddenly exclaimed, "Blue-coat," as the sound of a bugle came to him from the cavalry camp.

Rain-all-day's letter to her grandson had been delivered and read, but it had not shaken his ambition to imitate Ta-tan-ka-yo-tan-kah. In a moment more he was again under cover, and no wild-cat ever went through underbrush more stealthily. He reached, unseen, a lurking-place from which he could take

his first look at the cloth lodges of pale-face warriors.

The commander of that detachment of cavalry had been among Indians before. The tents were pitched in the middle of a natural "open," with no cover near them for enemies to skulk in. The wagons were hauled up in line, outside, and the horse-corral was between the tents and the river. Sentries were posted, pickets were stationed, and Little Smoke understood that it was impossible to surprise that beautifully ordered camp, or even to steal anything from it. There was no chance here, such as he had profited by among the Crows. Sitting Bull himself would have given it up, but his young admirer was a boy as well as an Ogalallah, and so he both surprised the camp and carried off a prize. Without any wisdom or prudence whatever, he suddenly put his hand to his mouth and gave all the power of his voice to the fierce, taunting war-whoop which he sent in among those blue-uniformed, bearded swordsmen.

In an instant all was commotion, but all was order, nevertheless. Men sprang to the saddles of horses that were ready, and saddles seemed to jump upon the horses' backs which were bare.

One squad of six, led by an officer, came galloping at once in the direction of that unexpected war-whoop. The enemy they were after did not "stand his ground" for one moment. He lay down upon it, creeping snake-like along a rabbit-path among some dense hazels. The splendidly mounted white warriors who dashed past him were looking for braves on ponies, and not for an unarmed, naked boy, playing hide-and-seek with them.

The camp was actually left alone.

One cavalryman had mounted a horse whose too-spirited behavior compelled him to hand his carbine to a comrade, and just such another reason made it impossible for that comrade to carry two guns. He dropped one of them on the ground near those hazel bushes, intending that it should be picked up when the squad returned. Hardly had they galloped a hundred yards before Little Smoke had captured the carbine.

Not many minutes later, while the cavalry and their keen-eyed scouts were scouring around farther and farther from their camp, in search of red warriors, a log with a carbine tied to it and covered with bushes, seemed to shove itself gently away from the river-bank. It drifted with the current, but its

drifting slanted more and more until it lodged upon the opposite shore.

Little smoke had performed a feat worthy of a warrior, but Rain-all-day had told him yet another story of Ta-tan-ka-yo-tan-kah, and the blue-coats must now have an illustration of it. The leggings he had taken off were put on again, and the carbine was slung across the bare shoulders of its new owner. He had no cartridges for it, and his other weapons were likely to be more useful, but it was a trophy and a proud ornament to wear. He returned to his ponies in the woods and found them all safe, but he would have lost at least one of them, willingly, rather than not to have copied Sitting Bull's cunning stratagem.

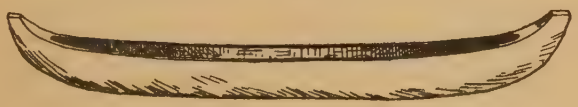
There was more than a little of out-and-out boy mischief in it. He rapidly gathered heaps of bark, and brush, and dead wood, and placed them at about such intervals as there might be between the fires in front of so many Indian lodges. He made twenty heaps in a remarkably short time, and that number of lodges would have indicated a pretty strong hunting party. Out, now, came flint and steel, and one heap was set on fire. Brands from that first blaze quickly kindled the other mock camp-fires. As soon

as all were well agoing, Little Smoke sprang upon the back of his own pony and urged all four to a gallop.

"Ugh!" he exclaimed. "Ta-tan-ka-yo-tan-kah fool blue-coat once more."

Little Smoke's imitation of his works did, for the cavalry spent nearly all the rest of that day in finding the ford, crossing the river, and cautiously feeling their way, guarding well against ambushes and surprises, led by the smoke of those fires. At last they charged gallantly in and discovered that there was even less "camp" around the nearly burned-out heaps than there had been "warrior" behind the war-whoop which had first startled them.

Meantime, Little Smoke had ridden along full of discontent because he had not been able to stay and see how Sitting Bull's invention had worked. It had annoyed the enemy very successfully, for the whole cavalry force "slept on their arms" that night, ready to spring up at a moment's warning, and the veteran major in command confessed himself completely puzzled.



CHAPTER VI.

THE WHEEL AND THE PLACER.

Bert Raynor was all alone after his uncle set out to recover the wagon-wheel. There was very little for him to do, that afternoon, except to admire everything around him and to think of home. Before he finished doing that he had thought of every boy he knew, and of what that boy would think and say if suddenly brought and put down in front of the "shack."

"They'd all ask me if there was any danger of Indians," he said to himself. "Glad that none ever come here, but I'll keep my eyes open."

He knew that he was in the Indian country, and in a part of it specially forbidden to white men, but he was a little too positive in his idea that the red men themselves never came there. It made him more comfortable, however, and a long scouting expedition, up and down the river, had just enough work in it to keep him from feeling lonely. He even felt

a new kind of exhilaration in eating supper all by himself, and at last in lying down with his rifle close by him, ready for use, and with a great fire blazing in front of the cabin door.

Meanwhile, Uncle Jake had had no difficulty in following the one-wheel trail left by Bill Adams up to the spot where the angry miner decided to let his mule carry the wheel.

"He'll get sick of that, too," said Jake. "He'll pitch it over before he gets much farther. I've got to have that wheel, or I might about as well not have any wagon."

That was the precise point of Bill Adams's revenge, and his sulky fit lasted him all that night and nearly all the next day. Toward night of that second day, however, it occurred to him that he was only punishing his own mule now—the one that carried the wheel—and when he made his camp he rolled the helpless and useless thing to one side, remarking: "Lie there, will you? Guess Jake Raynor wishes he'd come to some kind of terms with me. He's the most contrary, obstinate, pig-headed, self-willed, unreasonable critter I ever had for a partner. I've got rid of him, anyhow."

Bill had searched for mines as he went, but he

had not yet discovered anything, and he pushed on again in the morning. He did not so much as go and look at the wheel or the spot to which he had rolled it, and he had no idea that Jake Raynor was even then coming after it.

All that second day, after leaving the shack, Jake had followed Bill's trail, and it was not yet sunset when he came to the ashes of Bill's camp-fire.

"I'll look around for that wheel first thing," he said. "That's it; there's a wheel-mark in the sand."

Bill had spitefully rolled the wheel as far as he could send it, and it had gone on until it tumbled into a little gully and lay down. There it rested now and there Jake Raynor found it, lying in the bed of some old, dried-up stream.

Jake shouted: "How are you, Bill Adams? I've got the wheel back, spite of you!" and then, as he was stooping to pick it up, he suddenly exclaimed: "I declare! Bill Adams never took a look at this gravel, or he'd have stayed right here. It's the best sign for a placer we've lit on. I'll work at it till dark, anyhow."

He had no tools except his hands and his knife and a piece of wood, but before it grew too dark to pick over that sand and gravel he said to himself:

"If I haven't pulled in nigh twenty dollars' worth of dust and nuggets you may shoot me. I reckon Bert won't mind being alone just one day longer. I'll put in to-morrow here and stake out my claim. Then I'll go to the shack and fetch on the outfit. Reckon we've struck it rich."

Perhaps he had, and at all events he was glad that Bill Adams knew nothing about it. He had no idea of how dissatisfied Bill had been with the mean, rugged, hopeless kind of country he had plodded into that day. Neither did he have any notion of how queer the Black Hills and the whole world were beginning to seem to poor, lonely Bert Raynor.

Bert had risen that morning to find himself with no better company than three mules and a three-wheeled wagon. He had cooked and eaten his breakfast, and then he had caught more fish than three men could eat for dinner. Then he had scouted up and down and even into the woods at the foot of the hills. The more he scouted around the more he was put in mind of the fact that the Sioux nation owned the land he stood on, but he had a poor opinion of Indian titles to their lands, for he said to himself: "Uncle Jake says we can claim all the land we can fence in, on this side of the river. It would make

the bulliest kind of a ranch, unless the Indians got to be troublesome. What if some of 'em should come now? The shack would make a pretty strong fort. Unless they should take me by surprise, I could fight them off all day."

He did not say anything about what might happen to him at the end of that day, but every time he came back from a patrol, and saw that the mules and the shack were safe, he drew a long breath of relief. That afternoon he even took a pick and did some work on the mining claim, but he seemed to have very little heart for it. He had already selected new names for the valley, and the river, and the ranch, and he was trying to make them fit, apparently, when a new idea of another sort came to him, and he exclaimed: "That's a fact! Now, I never thought of it before. I can cut down some saplings and small trees and make a barricade for the door of the shack. There ought to be a good stockade all around it, but that would take a gang of men and piles of hard work. I'll fix the door."

There was only a place left for a door, as yet, but every stout bit of timber Bert cut and brought to it seemed to make him feel better. He cut notches in them, so that after they should be set

up inside and braced he could poke a rifle through. Then he made some shot-holes in the walls for the same purpose, and carried some provisions in from the wagon and a pail of water.

"I might have to stand a siege," he said, "and I don't mean to be starved out. I must get up before daylight to-morrow morning. Indians always try to surprise a camp just as the sun is rising."

Somehow or other, all the boy romance of that kind of life was oozing away, and things were beginning to look uncomfortably real. It had been so ever since he awoke that morning, and came out of the cabin to find himself utterly alone in the heart of the forbidden lands of the great and terrible Sioux nation.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CAMP OF THE OGALALLAHS.

Neither Bert Raynor, nor Uncle Jake, nor Bill Adams, had the least idea that anything had been done especially for their benefit, so many days before and away over on Powder River. Something had been done, and how it concerned them they were to find out in due season.

Little Smoke found the trail of No-ton-thah's band broad and easy to follow, from the ford where they had crossed the river. He pushed his ponies along with a feeling in him that it ought to take about four ponies, or even mules, to carry all the pride and exultation in him. He felt safer and safer so far as the blue-coats were concerned, and his appetite put him more and more strongly in mind of the fact that he had eaten nothing since yesterday morning. He had seen plenty of game, large and small, and the sight of it had made him hungrier. It seemed as if the deer knew what a hurry he was

in, and hardly got out of his way. At last one was altogether too reckless, and Little Smoke brought him down. Any hour is dinner-time when a boy is famishing, and there was a fire kindled in short order, right where the deer was killed. Then an uncommon amount of broiling and eating was done, and Little Smoke felt better.

He was pretty sure that the cavalry would inquire into the secret of those mock camp-fires, and so would be between him and the Crows. He was also pretty sure that the blue-coats would not pursue him, because they had previously gone into camp instead of following No-ton-thah. He did not guess the whole effect of his camp-fires, or how much more firmly, after seeing them, the major commanding the cavalry decided that he had penetrated far enough into the Powder River country. He had said to the captain: "There may be some sense in the march Custer's making into the Black Hills country. The miners want that and they'll take it anyhow, some day, but this is Indian ground."

"So is the Black Hills. Treaties are worth nothing, or he wouldn't be there, and you and I wouldn't be risking our scalps here."

"That's just what we're doing, captain," said the

major. "We've got our warning. My duty is to march the command down river at once. We've explored far enough."

"Not a doubt of it," replied the captain, and he was right, but they had been stirred up and hurried away by one naked Indian boy, nevertheless.

It does not take long for an Indian hunting party to break up camp, and No-ton-thah's band had been on the march quickly after Rain-all-day read Little Smoke's signal to the chief. They went fast and far during the remainder of the day, but they had not been long encamped that evening before a scout whom they had left behind came riding swiftly in, to tell them of the blue-coats, and what they were doing.

"Won't cross river," said No-ton-thah, promptly. "Great chief not need to run away any farther. Go one day more. Go toward Pah-sap-pa."

That is the Sioux name, which is translated "Black Hills," and all the next day the band marched on in the usual Indian fashion, the ponies and the squaws carrying all the burdens, while the warriors had enough to do in carrying their dignity. This was all the more tremendous, just now, because it was mixed up with a vast amount of patriotic

wrath against the pale-faces, who were wickedly invading the best hunting-grounds of the Sioux nation. It was precisely what the United States Government had solemnly agreed not to do in about four dozens of treaties. It is not easy for an Indian to understand how a white man's government has any right to break its word, and it is a thing which white men themselves ought never to be able to understand.

Rain-all-day carried no pack and rode a pony, muttering to herself, as she went, the endless legends of her people and the names of its memorable places, and its battles with other tribes and with the pale-faces. She was almost the only complete copy of the history of the Ogalallahs, and it was a pity that she could not have been printed, so that other people could have read the record.

Rain-all-day and two other squaws had a special burden of their own. Half of it was pride and the other half was anxiety. Little Smoke's grandmother and his mother and his aunt were proud of the fact that the danger-signal had been given by him, and they were anxious as to what had become of him. Rain-all-day declared her entire confidence in his ability to get away from the blue-coats. His mother, Te-o-na-wish, was not quite so sure, perhaps, because

she did not at all resemble Rain-all-day, but was short and fat. His aunt, the wife of Burnt Face, was more like her mother, and fully believed in Little Smoke's return. His elder brother, Ath-poh-goh, did not trouble himself with that question or with any other which did not relate to himself.

Little Smoke's camp, that night, was all his own, and so was his "corral" of four first-rate ponies, but he did not kindle any camp-fire to tell wandering Crows that he was there.

Ath-poh-goh was in a much larger camp, but he did not own it, and he had not done anything for it. He had not so much as caught fish or killed game for his own supper. As for that, however, the two lodges of Rain-all-day's family could afford to depend upon the sure rifle and restless industry of Burnt Face. The "squaw-man" had not lost his paleface instinct about looking a little ahead, and he was worth any three of No-ton-thah's braves as a household provider.

Burnt Face was not looked upon as a great warrior, but he was sure to be consulted with reference to anything which concerned pale-faces. He asserted, often, that he hated all white men as much as if he were himself a born Ogalallah. He never even

spoke of them if he could help it, and there must have been a good reason. Perhaps his life in the "settlements" had been made unpleasant for him by judges, and juries, and sheriffs. It is apt to be so with "squaw-men," but the real history of Burnt Face was not known even by Rain-all-day.

No-ton-thah had this day asked him what it was best to do about the cavalry, and the "squaw-man's" advice had been: "You don't want any cavalry. Get as far away from them as you can. Go to Pah-sap-pa. You haven't any braves to throw away. They may have brought along some hundred-rifle guns."

That was not a bad name for the "Gatling guns," then recently supplied to the troops serving on the plains. The red men had an especial dread of them, as being the worst kind of "bad medicine."

No-ton-thah listened and said "Ugh!" and walked away. Rain-all-day had also listened, and she remarked: "Burnt Face heap fool. Talk right this time. Pah-sap-pa good medicine."

She had no opportunity to tell her opinion to her son-in-law, for he too had walked away. He had not gone far, however, and now he stood and looked at something and whistled.

Ath-poh-goh was almost at work! There was

yet light enough for some kinds of art-work, but who would have thought of an uncommonly fat Ogalallah boy as a musical instrument maker?

He sat on the grass entirely absorbed in a queer contrivance which he held in his hands. Two pieces of red cedar, each of them about three feet long, two inches thick one way and an inch the other, had each been scraped very flat and smooth on one side. Up and down those smooth sides had been gouged rounded grooves, so that when the pieces were faced together the grooves made one round hole, running their entire length. Some pine-tree gum had made the fitting air-tight. Five air-holes had been cut, and a sort of mouth-piece shaved down at one end. Ath-poh-goh had given all the mind he had to the construction of a ka-tun-kah or flute, and he had about reached a triumph. During that day's march he had found and killed a large milk-snake with a prettily mottled skin, and the ka-tun-kah was now to put on all the beauty the snake had lost. Ath-poh-goh had shaved down his flute until the skin could be carefully drawn over it to dry tightly on.

Burnt Face looked and whistled, but Ath-poh-goh's work had other interested witnesses. Not far from him stood a group of Indian girls. Among

them, prettiest of all, but barely yet in her 'teens, was Na-da-wis, the only daughter of No-ton-thah, and Burnt Face heard one of the other girls say to her, teasingly: "Ugh! Na-da-wis, now Ath-poh-goh has a ka-tun-kah, you will be serenaded."

A peal of laughter was the first reply of Na-da-wis, and at the end of it she added: "Ath-poh-goh blow his ka-tun-kah, all the mules ashamed of themselves. Give it up. Never bray any more. Ka-tun-kah beat 'em.'

Ath-poh goh said nothing, for he was admiring the skin of that milk-snake, and all the fun the girls could make could not disturb his confidence in his ka-tun-kah.

CHAPTER VIII.

LITTLE SMOKE IN HIS GLORY.

No-ton-thah was in no hurry to break up camp and go forward. His temporary stopping-place was every way comfortable. One of his scouting braves had brought in information that the blue-coated cavalry seemed to have no intention of pursuing, but had made a halt close to the ground abandoned by the Ogalallahs. Other braves were out in other directions, and the very brilliant grandson of Rain-all-day, moreover, had not yet made his reappearance. He might come in at any moment, bringing important news. He would, in that case, become a sort of postscript to his own smoke-letter, and No-ton-thah was well aware that the very cracker is sometimes the loudest part of a long lash. It was well to give the youngster a fair chance to catch up, for it looked as if he must in some way have managed to lose his pony.

As for Rain-all-day, she and Te-o-na-wish were be-

ginning to feel more than a little uneasy, while Mrs. Burnt Face actually scolded her husband for the care and time he was frivolously wasting upon the air-holes in Ath-poh-goh's ka-tun-kah at a time of so much family anxiety. The squaw-man heard all she had to say, but did not lift his eyes from his work.

"Don't you worry," he growled at her. "He'll come in all right. His time hasn't come. He won't get wiped out first thing. There's too much out-and-out mischief in him. He's safer'n a grown-up warrior'd be, so far as any cavalry's concerned."

She was forced to be satisfied with that, but Little Smoke thoroughly deserved the confidence Burnt Face expressed in his capacity for mischief and for taking care of himself. He had done what he could for the Crows and for the cavalry, and now he was dealing prudently with his precious ponies. He determined not to overdrive them, and he changed his captured bridle from one to another that he might ride each in turn until he should know what they were severally good for. There was no saddle to change, but there was a wide difference in the disposition of the prizes to be bridled and mounted. The particularly good-looking pony that undertook to show how a Crow warrior's best mus-

tang could throw an Ogalallah boy became tired of the attempt in due season. Little Smoke seemed to stick to him like a very large and active fly, and all the bucking and kicking and plunging amounted to nothing. The mustang was more completely broken in for future use, and that was all there was of it, for he had not thrown anybody. The other ponies kept up well during that operation, and the traveling was pretty rapid for a while. No unnecessary delays were made afterward, but it was necessary to halt now and then, to rest and feed. One more night had to be spent in a lonely bivouac, and it could fairly have been said that Little Smoke slept with one eye open. He selected the shadiest kind of a rocky dingle to camp in, and there was little danger that any hostile Crows would be searching for him after dark.

With the earliest dawn of light the young wanderer was once more in motion along the broad, well-marked trail, and he now felt sure that he and his prizes were safe. A few hours of steady work brought him out upon a rising ground where he at once began to feel a great deal better. Right before him, in full view, arose columns of smoke from the camp-fires of his own band. He could pull up his

ponies and get them and himself into good shape for exhibition to the chief and his warriors, not to speak of the other boys, and the squaws and the girls. He had no paint to put on, but he had picked up several fine feathers as he rode along, and they were all stuck in his hair now. The captured United States carbine was slung across his naked shoulders. The bow and arrows were neatly slung across the carbine, and had a peculiarly warlike appearance. The lance he had won from the Crow picket had no streamer, but then it was a remarkably fine thing for a young brave to carry.

Riding one pony and leading three more, Little Smoke rode gallantly onward in the direction of the Ogalallah camp. No boy of his age had ever before returned to it so rigged out, and something to that effect was said by the first brave he met, but that fellow happened to be one who was noted for not bringing in anything, and a sarcasm from him did not count. Next were three old squaws, and a stream of caustic remarks from them had no unpleasant effect, for neither of them had ever been distinguished for anything but their tongues. A little farther on, however, a genuine "brave" was met, a warrior of rank, and Little Smoke had to halt and

answer questions. He was listened to with due gravity, but the only comment made was unsatisfactory.

"Ugh! Heap boy!" said the warrior. "Go tell chief. Keep mouth shut till No-ton-thah hear all lie."

It began to seem, a few minutes later, as if all the boys in camp had enviously turned out for the purpose of spoiling Little Smoke's triumph. They whooped, yelled, asked questions, made derisive gestures, and behaved in a way to have upset his new dignity altogether, if it had not been for the fact that they dared not follow him to the lodge of the chief or interfere with his getting there.

No-ton-thah was aware that his expected scout had arrived and had brought with him something uncommon, but waited with grim dignity in front of his lodge. Little Smoke halted at a respectful distance until a motion of the chief's hand bade him come forward. There were other great men gathered, by that time, heroes of many war-paths, and of long lists of captured ponies.

"Ugh!" said No-ton-thah. "Boy get down. Stand still. Where get ponies?"

"In the corral of the Crows!" replied Little Smoke.

"Ugh!" said the chief, for it was his first intimation of the presence of his ancient foes on the Powder River. "Carbine?" he added, inquiringly.

"At the camp of the blue-coats," was all that Little Smoke felt that he was yet permitted to explain.

"Blue-coat give him lance?" asked the chief, with almost a smile.

"Fight with Crow warrior," said Little Smoke.

"No take scalp," said No-ton-thah. "Tell all, now. Talk slow. Keep lie in mouth. No-ton-thah saw smoke on rock."

To do Little Smoke justice, he was carefully correct in his recital of his adventures, now that he was permitted to make it. The chief and the warriors listened in dignified silence, but it was plain that only the visible trophies enabled them to believe what they heard. There were many "Ughs!" when it was ended, and the chief alone spoke.

"Good!" he said, emphatically. "Little Smoke boy. Stay heap boy awhile. Great chief by and by. Keep pony, gun, lance. Ride pony. Put gun away in lodge. Put lance away. Carry bow and arrows till he grow tall. Some day go on war-path. Take scalp. Strike Aricara. Strike blue-coat. Strike

miner. Chief say Little Smoke great brave then, boy now."

That might be, but he was probably the proudest boy in the Sioux nation at that moment, in spite of a very much diminished idea that he had suddenly become a conquering hero and a growing celebrity. He felt smaller, but even the reduced size was pretty large.

No-ton-thah was a wise chief. He had taken Little Smoke down a peg or so because it was not well for a boy to win too much glory on one trip. It was well that so promising a youngster should not be killed by vanity.

The fresh information confirmed the chief in the purposes he had already formed, and his councilors fully agreed with him. While they were gravely conferring over the matter, Little Smoke led away his ponies to his own lodge, and he was less hindered by the boys for being accompanied by a pair of Dog Soldiers, whose business it was to see that orders were carried out.

Rain-all-day and Te-o-na-wish and Mrs. Burnt Face were awaiting their young hero, and so was an uncommonly good breakfast. They were ready to do as much to spoil him as could be done by one grand-

mother, one mother, and one aunt, and they had neighborly help from other squaws.

Ath-poh-goh was there, but he was more in sympathy with No-ton-thah, and did not wish his brother to be spoiled. He spoke lightly of the ponies. They were an inferior lot, he said, and they had been driven out of the Crow camp as worthless, and Little Smoke had found them wandering around. The lance was a used-up affair that some Aricara had thrown away because he had no use for it. The blue-coats always left their spoiled guns behind them. Such a carbine would surely burst if it should be fired off. It would not hit anything. In short, the entire story of Little Smoke's adventures was declared "heap lie" by Ath-poh-goh.

Burnt Face took the matter more seriously, and had minute questions to ask as to every step taken by his Ogalallah nephew while away from the band

"Bully boy," he said, at the end of it. "If he isn't wiped out early my guess isn't worth a persimmon. If he'd been a grown-up brave he'd never have got out of either of them scrapes alive."

That might be, but the female members of the household and their guests voted Little Smoke a "young chief," and said he would be like Ta-tan-ka-

yo-tan-kah. The entire band was now quickly aware that it was to march for the Black Hills, and was in a state of excitement. For some cause it had not visited Pah-sap-pa for several seasons, and that may have been one reason why Rain-all-day had told Little Smoke so much about the enchanted and haunted country. The news that he was to go and see it set him on fire with eager curiosity. His imagination began to work at once, for he was to actually hunt among the hills and valleys which were peopled so differently from the other regions in which he had wandered since he had been old enough to know or care where he went. There was so much to think of and to remember that it may have helped in keeping him from being spoiled at once. He had seen blue-coat cavalry. He had penetrated a Crow encampment. He was no ordinary boy, but a fellow to whom remarkable things were beginning to come. What if he should now go to Pah-sap-pa, and actually see or hear a manitou? He knew, for Rain-all-day had told him, that there were hollow trees there and chasms in the rocks, from which voices came at times. They did not come to everybody, but they might come to an extraordinary boy like himself. Medicine-men, and medicine-squaws like Rain-all-day,

and very great braves like Ta-tan-ka-yo-tan-kah, if they would go without eating or sleeping for a week, could go and sit down before one of those chasms or one of those hollow trees, and be almost sure of hearing something if they waited long enough. Then they would be sure of good luck if nothing happened to prevent its coming to them. He knew that Rain-all-day had starved herself thin more than once, when she was in especial need of a "good medicine" dream. It was true that she had reported dreadfully bad dreams when they came, but then they had not been dreamed in Pah-sap-pa, among the manitous, and the band had gotten itself into scrapes by neglecting her advice. The idea of going without eating is always unpleasant to a growing boy, and Little Smoke was quite willing to put off any preparation of that sort until he should reach the mountain country; and the idea occurred to him that he could not reasonably be expected to starve more than half as long as would be needful in the case of a tall woman like his grandmother.

The orders of No-ton-thah as to the prizes were strictly obeyed. The lance and rifle were put away, but Burnt Face declared the latter a first-rate weapon, and promised to teach Little Smoke how to use it.

He was likely to be a good teacher, for he was the best shot in the band. He had been heard to say concerning marksmanship in general: "just do hate white men, but I will own up that they can shoot. Redskins don't seem to get the knack of it, somehow."

He was no longer a white man, but he had preserved some of the faculties belonging to the race he had wandered away from. One of these was his skill with a rifle, and another was a very un-Indian-like tendency to be all the while at work at something or other. There was often almost nothing to do in the camp of No-ton-thah, and those were hard times for Burnt Face. He had learned several Indian dialects fairly well, but he had not learned how to loaf, and Ath-poh-goh could beat him altogether.

It had been during the camp days when there was nothing to do that Little Smoke had so often sat and listened to the endless talk of Rain-all-day. He had lain on the grass and shut his eyes, and heard her tell of the old times among the Indian tribes, before any white man came near them, and about the wars and the battles of the Sioux with rival tribes, including some tribes which had now disappeared altogether. He had not forgotten a word she had said

An Ogalallah chief.

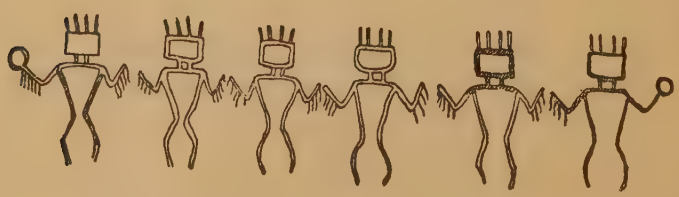
about the manitous, great and small, and the very great Manito. Neither had he failed to treasure up all she had muttered about the wickedness of the pale-faces and the wonders of their far-away country, where they had lodges built of stone and as large as a hill. They were terrible magicians, too. They had medicine-men who made guns and powder and knives, and who sent the measles and the small-pox among the poor Ogalallahs. They had other medicine-men who knew how to steal hunting-grounds and dig mines and drive away the red men from the graves of their people. Little Smoke learned it all, and he had a dim purpose of becoming a great chief, some day, and of scalping all the pale-faces in the world. It remained in his mind in spite of Rain-all-day's saying that they were as numerous as the grasshoppers, and that they had big guns as large as the trunk of a pine-tree.

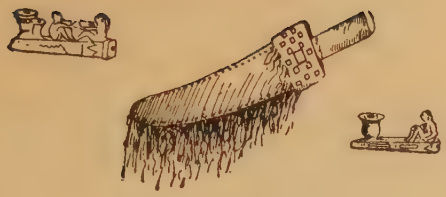
Other hours had been spent in the company of Burnt Face, watching whatever his hands were at work upon, but the "squaw-man" would not often say much about the people he had left. There were reasons why an Ogalallah brave should learn English, and he was willing to teach it to Little Smoke, but even while doing so he cautioned his nephew con-

cerning the great cunning and evil ways of the pale-faces, and was careful to speak of himself always as having become in heart a Sioux warrior.

Ath-poh-goh had a great many idle hours, and he never threw away one of them. They were an important part of his inheritance. He knew too much already to care for learning any more. He loved to lie still and think how very good-looking he was and how great a brave he was going to be, some day. He hated Burnt Face for having once been a pale-face, but he hated him twice as much for working, and knew that he would never himself disgrace the family in either of those ways.

The band of No-ton-thah broke camp and made a good day's march toward Pah-sap-pa. They did not encounter any herds of bison, and Little Smoke knew that it was of no use for him to watch for manitous, but he was glad to be so much nearer to the wonderful land and its wonderful people.





CHAPTER IX.

A VERY BAD PROSPECT.

Bill Adams "prospected," as the miners call it, industriously, and the farther he went the poorer grew his opinion of the Black Hills country. Rain-all-day could have told him that the region he was in was "bad medicine for all pale-faces." Bill said that his luck was against him, but she would have said that all the manitous of Pah-sap-pa were unfavorable to men of his kind. It became evident, at last, that if his temper was any sort of manitou, it was growing very unfavorable, indeed. He looked at rugged hillsides and sandy hollows with eyes which would have hardly consented to see gold in them if it had sparkled in the sunlight. At last, at the close of his fourth day of aimless and dissatisfied searching, he said aloud to one of his mules: "Here I am, no better off than I was when I started. I'll bet Jake Raynor'll make his pile off that claim, just by sticking to it. He's the most contrary, pig-headed, obstinate—"

Just there the mule interrupted him, putting out his head, laying back his ears, and sending straight at Bill a long-drawn, mournful, sonorous bray that dwindled to a whimper at its latter end.

"You've said it," replied Bill. "I'm another. I'll camp here to-night, and I'll take the back track in the morning, but I won't go near Jake Raynor."

So far, he had not discovered one sign of the presence of Indians, and he slept by his camp-fire as contentedly as if there were no such human beings.

That was also the case with Uncle Jake, after another fine day's work at his placer in the gully. He knew perfectly well that he was wasting time. He described his operations accurately when he remarked: "I'm just making a fool of myself. I could do four times as well if I had the tools. Yes, twenty times—but I can't get away. This here gully's taken a grip on me."

He had done fairly well, so far as dust and small nuggets were concerned, and he did not go to sleep for a long time after he lay down. He was kept awake by the gold that might or might not be in that gully. After he went to sleep he dreamed that it was all there, and that he had found it, in a great

heap that hardly needed washing, and that was too big for one wagon to carry. Then his dream took hold of the wagon and made it larger.

When daylight came, that next morning, neither Bill Adams nor Jake Raynor knew how many days it had been since No-ton-thah's band of Ogalallah Sioux had left Powder River behind them. They knew of no such Indians, or that they or any others were coming to Pah-sap-pa.

Bert Raynor, away down the little river at the claim, knew as little about Indians, but he was becoming unpleasantly aware that his uncle had been gone three whole days.

"Guess he hasn't found the wheel as he said he would," remarked Bert to himself, over his lonely breakfast. "Perhaps he caught up with Bill, and they quarreled again. They wouldn't hurt each other. They're not that kind of men. For all I know, something awful has happened to him. Oh, but don't I wish he was back here!"

He could hardly help thinking of his home and his mother just then, and a strong sense of homesickness began to creep over him. There was not a living human being to help him drive it away. The river and the mountains had a lonesome look, and

even the mules did not seem to nibble their grass as cheerfully as usual.

There was one long minute, as he stood in front of the shack, when he did not seem to be looking at the mules or at anything near them. It is wonderful how any one can sometimes see across country, across mountains and valleys, rivers, forests, plains, whole States; but then it is with his mind's eye, and that is truly a wonderful thing. Bert was looking, in that way, at the front and then at the back, and at the barns, of a very pleasant farm-house not far out on the river road from Marietta, Ohio. He saw orchards and fields and woods. There were cattle and horses, and somebody was hitching up a span, and somebody else was putting on a yoke, and he was half sure somebody was milking a cow. He wished, almost, that he could get a bucket and go and feed the pigs; but his looking went on into the house, and he saw so much there, or so many, that he drew a long breath and stopped, for he found himself getting too homesick for anything. There was not in all the mining country, nor anywhere else in all the world, another place so beautiful, so nice a place to go to and stay in, as that Ohio farm and farm-house. The biggest ranch,

the riches gold-mine, the most tremendous adventures, were nothing to be compared to it. There was a long, strong cord between the front gate and Bert Raynor, and somebody who had hold of it was pulling, pulling, pulling.

"Guess I'd better go scouting," said Bert to himself, and he took his rifle and set out. It was dreadfully solitary work, and, although there was not a sign of danger, a feeling that it was not a safe country to live in got to be almost unpleasant before that patrol was over. It would have been something like a hundred times stronger if Bert had been near enough to Bill Adams to know some things that Bill learned at about that time.

Bill had packed and unpacked his mules three times before he was satisfied, and even then he remarked to one of them: "I never could pack a mule. Hope that'll stay on." Then he took a long stare at the other mule's load, and added: "I'll take a look ahead, now, from that there rise. If I don't see anything that promises better than this, I'll take the back track along my own trail."

The "rise" was a low hill from which the forest had apparently been burned away so that it had not grown again, and a man mounted upon one of its

rocks could take a pretty long look beyond. Bill climbed the hill and one of its largest bowlders, and then, in a few minutes more, he came back on a clean run to where he had left his mules. He was evidently excited, for he addressed them as if they had been human beings.

"Indians!" he exclaimed to them. "Do you hear that? Indians! Your scalps are worth more'n mine is 'bout this time. Reckon mine's worth somewhere about twenty-five cents."

Perhaps that would have been a fair price if he had been seen by any red men, in spite of all the haste he made in getting away, but he was not followed at once. Several hours later a group of excited pony-riders halted around the ashes of his campfire, and discussed them and the other traces he had left behind him. "One miner," they said, "two mules"; and then one of their number rode away southward as if to carry the news, while the rest remained as if waiting for orders.

Bert Raynor at the lonely ranch knew nothing of all this, but Bill Adams was not far from correct in remarking, as he urged his mules along: "No more prospectin' 'mong the Black Hills 'bout these days. The redskins have come!"

It was rather the white miners who had come, contrary to all treaties, and there would have to be a long and bloody war before Pah-sap-pa would become a safe place for mining enterprises.

CHAPTER X.

LITTLE SMOKE IN PAH-SAP-PA.

THERE was no prettier or merrier maiden in the whole band than Na-da-wis, the daughter of No-ton-thah. She was barely thirteen, but her mother could see what she was going to be, and had more than once said so to the chief. She told him that three more snows would work wonders for such a damsel as Na-da-wis. There would be even a detrimental consequence, for there would be little hope of her getting married. Her value would be manifestly too great, and there was no brave in the band rich enough to pay so many ponies as would make up a moderate price for Na-da-wis.

No-ton-thah had listened thoughtfully, but had made no remark more definite than "Ugh! Heap girl."

He knew that his wife had reason on her side, for she too had been a beauty and her father and mother had known it, and had postponed the wed-

ding, according to Sioux customs, until No-ton-thah agreed with them as to the value of his bride. She had cost him six ponies, a mule, three blankets, two knives, a box of paint, and a rifle. That had not been all, for he had also been compelled to fight with a rival until they both were more than half killed. Mrs. No-ton-thah had been justly proud of all the circumstances attending her own wedding, and was determined that when the right time should come she would do her full duty by her daughter.

No-ton-thah was entirely willing, and looked at Na-da-wis admiringly. He wished for three more daughters just as precious, so that he might have more great braves for sons-in-law and be made richer and richer every time there was a wedding in his family.

Na-da-wis appreciated herself. She had a great deal to do, but most of it was chatter. She and her girl friends made endless fun of all the young braves, and they despised mere boys as beneath notice. Any fellow, moreover, who had not stolen a horse, or in some other way equally honorable distinguished himself, was to be snubbed accordingly.

Such uninteresting young Ogalallahs were informed by the merry maidens that they ought to

be like the prairie-dogs, and jump into the nearest hole whenever a girl looked at them.

Na-da-wis had plenty of curiosity and a great many queer ideas. She had listened to Rain-all-day, now and then, and she had heard other people tell wonderful stories especially about the pale-faces. Of course, she could not believe all that was told her, but she was a true-hearted, patriotic Ogalallah girl, and she hated all the enemies of her people. She was not afraid of Crows or any other Indians, but she had a vague dread of some day being killed by blue-coats. She had a looking-glass and a string of beads which had been given to her by No-ton-thah from the presents he received when he visited the Sioux Agency at Fort Pierre, and both of these were "good medicine," but she was well aware that the pale-face magicians could do terrible things.

She and all other Sioux girls were thinking of those wicked people more than ever about this time. They heard the dark rumors which came, continually, of the swarms of white marauders who were about to steal the Sioux hunting-grounds. It was even said that they meant to steal Pah-sap-pa and dig holes in it, everywhere, to get the gold the manitous had hidden.

Grown-up squaws and warriors shook their heads dolefully when each new story went around, but would not say much about it to a girl like Na-da-wis. So her curiosity to know more about pale-faces grew stronger, and now it made her feel like making friends with Little Smoke.

He was no ordinary boy, for he had stolen three Crow ponies, but he had done more than that; he had seen a war-party of blue-coats very closely, and had looked into their camp and stolen a rifle from them. Anybody could speak to such a boy.

Na-da-wis did not know how glad Little Smoke was to tell his story to somebody who did not say, "Ugh! Heap lie!" That was what the other boys had said, as a general thing, and one ill-natured old squaw, who had overheard while he painted his exploits, had sharply remarked: "Little Smoke a black bird. Sit on a bush and chatter."

The girls, half a dozen at a time, were willing to hear and then to ask more questions than he could answer. They were much dissatisfied because the blue-coats had had no white squaws with them, for they knew that the way they made their clothes was wonderful.

Ath-poh-goh was one of the boys whom the

Ogalallah girls looked down upon, and he knew it, for they had told him so, but he was all the more jealous concerning their respectful treatment of Little Smoke. Ath-po-goh had no prize ponies to exhibit, nor had he any stories to tell, but he knew himself to be more of a fellow than his younger brother. He was three years older, and would soon be a brave. He was very handsome. Besides, with much help from Burnt Face, he had finished his flute, and there would be music pretty soon. Some of the young warriors had ka-tun-kahs, but there had been no serenading since the march began, and Ath-poh-goh did not dare to do his first tooting in camp. Neither could he leave it after dark, so one day he slipped away from the line of march on a pony belonging to his grandmother.

That animal had to gallop fast until he had carried his rider into a lonely little valley between two craggy hills. There Ath-poh-goh dismounted, tied his pony to a bush, and sat down upon a large stone with his flute in his hand. The snake-skin was pretty dry and all the holes were well smoothed. The mouth-piece was wide and well polished. The other end was carved to be as near like the tail of a fish as might be, and had been

painted in streaks and spots that no fish ever wore. It was a truly wonderful flute. Ath-poh-goh drew in all the breath his lungs would hold and blew.

Squawk — hoot — toot — yow — wheeze — all the cedar-wood and snake-skin yelled for him, and his fingers moving on the holes varied the squalling marvelously. Three crows on a withered pine-tree broke out into cawing. A buzzard rose from a gully and soared away in sweeping circles, looking down for the unknown beast he had listened to. A frightened deer bounded away into the thickest woods he could find. A pair of coyotes uttered loud howls and went racing down the valley, as if anxious to be out of the reach of whatever might be following that music.

Ath-poh-goh gave a shrill whoop of satisfaction, and blew again. His poor tethered pony had to stand still and shiver for two whole hours, while the delighted young Ogalallah practiced that rare instrument. In all the wide world there was not another flute just like that, and he knew it. He felt sure that he now had something for Na-da-wis and the other girls better than all the boasting stories of Little Smoke.

No-ton-thah had determined to go forward rapid-

ly until he should reach good buffalo ground, and the "dog soldiers" of the band kept up a pretty severe marching discipline. They included all the younger warriors, and some of them were disposed to lay strict hands upon the boys in particular. They prevented straggling in the daytime, and some of them patrolled the camp at night. There were scouts and pickets on duty, and it was a pretty well-ordered hunting expedition, but the squaws and girls had as much to say as ever among themselves.

It was with some misgivings, therefore, that Ath-po-goh, three evenings later, crept along in the dust to a patch of bushes not far from the lodge of No-ton-thah. There were three other lodges near, but he took it for granted that, if he blew a serenade, Na-da-wis would know for whom he was blowing. If so, she might come out and talk with him. He tooted a little gently, at first, changing his fingers on the holes pretty fast. He had never heard a tune in his life, and did not know that there was one. He had not been equally ignorant as to the powers of "dog soldiers," but he was about to learn more. He took too much courage as he listened to his own music, and he blew too hard. Na-da-wis did not come out of the lodge of No-ton-thah, but a number

of the camp police, dog soldiers of the gruffest kind, came out of the other lodges and ran for those bushes. Ath-poh-goh saw them coming, with each a stick in his hand. He stopped blowing and ran, but he was too late. He learned all about sticks before he reached the lodge of Rain-all-day, and was safe by camp law. His first serenade had been too successful altogether, and he determined never again to blow his ka-tun-kah while the band were on the march, or while the dog soldiers were suspicious of the possible nearness of prowling Crows and Cheyennes.

The chief may have had intimations concerning other red men, but he had no further fear as to the blue-coats. His last scout came in with the news that the cavalry were on their way out of the Powder River country. No-ton-thah had no idea how glad they were to get out. In a few days more he was in the western border of Pah-sap-pa, and here he bagan to get news of a different sort. Other parties of Ogalallahs were among the Black Hills, as was reported to him by one of their wandering hunters, and that was well. Ténfold more important was the fact that an overwhelming force of blue-coat cavalry was within their northern border, and that

little squads of miners were heard of at quite a number of places. It was afterward reported that there were nearly a thousand, all told, and every pick and shovel among them was a violation of a treaty, and provoked the wrath of the Sioux.

CHAPTER XI.

BILL AND JAKE.

Bill Adams was pretty badly scared, and he owned up to it like a man. In fact, the more he thought about those Indians, and of what they would be likely to think about him, the harder he pushed his mules. He rode first one and then the other, by turns, so as to get the most he could out of both. His greatest regret concerning them seemed to be that they were not race-horses. Of course, he had something to say, occasionally, as he went along. Before nightfall he had said very nearly all that there was to say about the general meanness of the Black Hills country, and concerning the amount and degree of born evil to be found in any and every kind of Indian. He had as poor an opinion of them as Rain-all-day had of him and other white men. It was just about sunset when Bill pulled in the mule he was riding, and said to it: "It won't do to crowd ye any further, nor your mate either. Not if you're

either of ye to be worth a cent to-morrer. Reckon we can't be far from the camp where I left the wheel. I'm kind o' sorry I crippled Jack Raynor's wagon for him, but his claim won't be worth much if the redskins are coming."

He rode along in moody silence for a few minutes, and then something startled him. "Hullo!" he exclaimed, excitedly, "what's that? Smoke? Hope 'tisn't some more Indians. Somebody's at my old camp. Reckon I'll scout a little before I go bustin' in."

He did so, quite successfully as well as rapidly, and was startled again. "Bless my stars!" he said. "It's old Jake Raynor himself, come for his wheel. Now I can show him just where it is, and that's what I'll do. He's a good fellow."

Only a little earlier in the day Uncle Jake had finished washing out the results of his gulch-work since morning, and had remarked to himself: "It's real rough on Bert to leave him so long alone. I'll start for the shack in the morning."

He was to have more encouragement than he could have expected in keeping his good intentions. He stirred out of the ashes the embers of his fire, got some bits of dry wood well a-going, and was

waiting for his coffee-pot to boil, when he heard a ringing halloo from the southward.

"Now! You don't!" he almost shouted, as he turned to look. "If there isn't Bill Adams! The old sinner! He's gone and got dissatisfied again and he's coming back."

Bill rode slowly in, but there was a hearty welcome waiting for him. Then Uncle Jake's good-humored face grew very long as he listened to the special reasons for his old partner's dissatisfaction.

"It's the worst kind of country, anyhow," said Bill, "but when you add Indians! Jake Raynor, they were headed this way."

"I was going to start for the shack in the morning, anyhow," said Jake. "We'll make an early start, and they won't catch up with us. That is, unless you object."

"Don't you be contrary now, first thing, Jake," said Bill. "Of course we"ll stick together. Did you get here to-day? Hullo! I see it. You found your old wheel. Well, you can take it, for all I care."

"Yes," said Jake, "I'm going to take it. You threw up your claim to it when you rolled it into the gully. I've been here three days, though."

"You don't say! What kep' ye? You didn't light onto anything worth while round here, did ye?"

"The wheel did," said Uncle Jake, and then came out the story of the gully.

"Just my luck!" came from Bill Adams nine times before Jake finished that story. He went and looked at the place, and growled at it and at his luck, and at all manner of Indians and mining enterprises. Even the sight of all the dust and nuggets that had been washed out did not seem to do him any good until Jake turned and looked him square in the face.

"Bill," said he, "Ill tell you what I'll do. I'll count you in as partner with me on this claim, just as if nothing had gone crooked. We'll come back soon as it's safe to come, and we'll work it on shares. You're all right, but you're the most dissatisfied, uneasy, grumbling—"

"Now, Jake," interrupted Bill, "maybe I am, but I wouldn't be if you wasn't so pig-headed and so contrary. You're a right down good fellow. You're as liberal as the day, and you're honest, but you're as obstinate as a mule."

"Guess I ain't obstinate enough to stay here and

trade my scalp to the Sioux," said Jake. "We'll be off before daylight; I don't reckon they'll come around sooner'n that, and we'll put our fire out."

Every other precaution they could think of was taken, and they kept watch and watch that night. They had eaten their breakfast already when the sun arose that next morning, and they were better friends than ever before. There was a tie of common danger between them and there was one more. Both of them seemed to feel an increasing anxiety on account of Bert, and they had a great deal to say about him, but they had no idea of the state of mind he was in.

Bert had good reason for being in a state of mind, for he was only a boy, and he was all alone in that far-away, lonely corner of the mysterious Black Hills country. He had been feeling lonelier with every hour that passed after the first day and night of his uncle's absence. He would have been willing, almost, to have given one of the remaining mules for another boy of his own age to talk to. There was no great amount of fun in fishing when there were so many hungry fish to take a hook, and not any hungry miners or others to take a fish after it was caught and cooked. There was a brief excitement in bringing down a deer, and the venison was a needed sup-

ply, but the very crack of Bert's rifle had a queer, uncanny sound. There was a half-way suggestion in it that it might be heard by the wrong ears. What right had he to be killing deer in that region? He did not know its Sioux name, but he had heard quite enough to know that the red men resented all intrusions upon their hunting-grounds. The grand and beautiful scenery seemed to be losing its peacefulness and to look as if there might have been something more than hunting and fishing done in and about that valley. He took a turn at the mining claim and actually knocked out several good nuggets, but he felt very little interest in them. There was more to be found in patrolling, although he was thus compelled to be thinking all the while of Indians. So he was while cutting young trees for the barricade of the shack door and while making loopholes to put a gun-muzzle through.

It was curious, perhaps, but thinking of Indians seemed to make him think more and more about his own home and about the people in it. No doubt it was a pretty place to remember, for he said so, and it may be that a boy from a farm-house on the Ohio River, near Marietta, came naturally by a full supply of ideas concerning all sorts of frontier romance and

Indian fighting. Right there, where Bert came from, had been made the first white settlement in Ohio. There had been a long, long list of conflicts with the wild tribes before the farms and homes in that valley were safe from roving war-parties. All that sort of thing had drifted farther and farther westward; and now here was Bert Raynor, at a greater distance from sober civilization than even his own great-great-grandfather had been when all Ohio was woods except a few small clearings along the river-bank. Bert thought of that, but did not know that he was also in even greater peril. He felt brave enough, moreover, and imagined himself doing all sorts of remarkable things in case any red men should come, now that he had changed the shack into something like a fort.

That morning, at about the hour when Uncle Jake and Bill Adams set out to return, believing that there was danger behind them, Bert sat by his fire, watching his frying-pan with some fish in it, and sipping a tin cup of coffee without any milk.

"If Uncle Jake isn't back by to-morrow night," he said to the frying-pan, "I shall feel sure something's happened to him. What'll I do then? I don't know where to look for him. All I could do

would be to wait awhile and then pack the mules with what they could carry and set out for home. No, I'd have to try and find him first. It's an awful piece of business!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE INDIANS CAME FIRST.

The gold-hunters who went into the Black Hills country without waiting for a new treaty between the United States and the tribes whose rights were invaded had a peculiar defense to make. They said that the Indians made no use of the entire region, not even occupying most of it at any time, and that it was therefore a kind of no-man's-land, open to the whole human race. Of course, in such a defense no account was made of the kind of permanent inhabitants known to the Indians as manitous, for not one of these had been heard or seen by any miner. It was a wild, lost land where no man lived, and some use ought to be made of it, and the gold-hunters and real-estate speculators poured in, train after train.

As to the invisible population of Pah-sap-pa, there was a wide difference between the views of the pale-face invaders and those held by the Sioux and other ancient owners of the haunted region. Every brave

and squaw, every boy and girl of Little Smoke's, that is of No-ton-thah's, band of Ogalallahs, was waking up tremendously concerning the old traditions and superstitions. The farther they advanced within the vague, uncertain boundary lines, the more actively all their imaginations worked. They believed in more and more manitous all the while, and began to have a higher and higher opinion of the value of Pah-sap-pa.

It was impossible for warriors to forget altogether that Rain-all-day was only a squaw, and to that extent an inferior being, but she was looked upon more than ever as a treasure of the band. Nobody else, male or female, knew anything like so much about the wonderful people that human eyes could not see, unless perhaps she herself had had a glimpse of a few of them, now and then. She was treated with much consideration accordingly. She had squaw company all the while, and even dignified braves managed to lounge around within hearing while she repeated again and again such legends as Longfellow has made use of in his beautiful poem of Hiawatha. Where Rain-all-day had learned them all was a matter which she did not offer to explain. There are men and women to whom all kinds of

legendary learning seems to come flying from unknown places, like wild pigeons to their own roost among the evening woods.

Little Smoke took every opportunity of listening, and so did Na-da-wis, but if Ath-poh-goh spent any time near his grandmother it was mainly because he had a better chance there for being admired by somebody. He was a tremendously good-looking fellow, beyond a doubt, and he knew it and was anxious to have others know it; but then he had his troubles. He was nearly out of paint for one thing, and what can a handsome young fellow do without paint? It is true that if he lives in the pale-face settlements he can make up for the loss of it in part by the use of standing collars, neck-ties, and shoe-blacking; but all of those and many other important things were out of Ath-poh-goh's reach. So was his ka-tun-kah, so far as any good of it was concerned, for he had been compelled to hide it away where no dog soldier could find it. There had been no secret made by anybody as to the manner in which his first serenade had come to grief. The other boys had more than a little to say about it, as a matter of course, but it was cruel of Na-da-wis herself to remark to her serenader, "Dog soldier

take a big stick and make a ka-tun-kah out of Ath-poh-goh."

There was no truth whatever in her very unkind insinuation, for he had taken his beating in silence. What was more than that, neither his throat nor any other could have been forced to squawk an imitation of his wonderful flute.

Burnt Face had heard all the news concerning the threatened inroad of miners. There was as yet very little of it, but even that was quite enough to stir up the minds of Ogalallahs. No-ton-thah himself came to the squaw-man and asked for his formal opinion upon a subject of so much importance.

"Gold-digger come, great heap. What do then? Burnt Face tell. Ugh!"

"No," said Burnt Face, with strong emphasis, "keep 'em out. Not let 'em get in. Once they get in and find some gold, send for more. More come; great crowd come to stay. No use for Sioux to kick then!"

"Ugh!" grunted No-ton-thah, fiercely, "Burnt Face right. No, only half right. All pale-face in Pah-sap-pa stay where Ogalallah find; where Tan-tan-ka-yo-tan-kah, where Crazy Horse, No-ton-thah

find. Feed coyote, feed buzzard. Ugh! Blue-coat keep miner out now, or Ogalallah knife ready."

"Keep 'em out first," said Burnt Face, shaking his head. "If they once get in, the treaty isn't worth a cent. You can't kill 'em all. Too many."

"Kill a heap!" growled the chief.

The squaw-man was correct, although the red men did all that No-ton-thah had prophesied of them. The army authorities regulated the migration of miners and other white men, for a while, rather than in any wise keeping them out of the forbidden lands. Then the Sioux warriors fought long and hard, and the bloodshed was terrible. After all was over, the miners and settlers owned the Black Hills.

That time had not come, or it was only just beginning, and No-ton-thah's band had come to Pah-sap-pa to hunt buffaloes, and not pale-faces. They expected to find much game and no miners along the bank of Crowsfoot River. That was a name that Bert Raynor had not heard of as belonging to the stream which ran past the claim and the shack where he was having so very lonely a time of it.

The many attractions of the beautiful mountain-bordered valley where his proposed ranch was to be, had been impressing him less and less, and his opin-

ion of the entire property would probably have changed at once if he could have known that it was attracting swarms of Sioux hunters.

More than one swarm was coming. No-ton-thah decided to go down Crowsfoot River, and set out in that direction on the very day in which Jake Raynor found his wheel in the gully. A long march would be required to reach the valley, and No-ton-thah was ignorant that another band, or part of one, had shown as much hunter wisdom as he. They were coming from the northward, rapidly, and when they drew near they were the first to be heard from, for they were the very Indians who astonished Bill Adams. A large number of bisons would be called for to satisfy the requirements of so many red sportsmen, but all of them had an idea that this part of Pah-sap-pa, at least, was as yet secure from any thievish intrusion.

Uncle Jake and Bill Adams had come to the Crowsfoot River Valley with much the same idea, and had indeed been the first intruders upon its solitude and its manitous. They traveled fast, now, after leaving the camp by the gully and placer. They could not guess whether the Indians up the valley behind them knew that they were there, or

whether any attempt was making to overtake them. The very uncertainty made them feel disposed to hurry along as fast as it was safe to push their mules.

Before long it began to seem as if the anxiety of the two miners about their own safety was changing entirely into a great worry about Bert. There was another great uncertainty, and they pointed it out by telling each other, over and over again, that the Sioux could not possibly have gotten into the valley as far down as the shack. They both knew very well that a hunting party was as likely to be first heard of in one place as in another. There might be one behind the next rise of ground, for all that they knew.

"Jake," said Bill, "the more I think of it, the more I reckon we'd better give up any notion of mining or prospecting for this season."

"I kind o' feel," said Jake, "as if it had been pretty much given up for us, a'ready. I haven't seen any redskins, but it's enough for me that you've seen 'em."

"You're right there, Jake," said Bill, "and it isn't of any kind of use till there's been a new treaty made. Anyhow, we can hold on to both claims.

Nobody'll come and jump 'em till after the cavalry's kind o' been 'round clearing up things."

"You can't just tell 'bout that, Bill," responded Jake. "What if Government's going to side with the redskins, and keep the old treaty 'bout this here Black Hills country? Mining claims wouldn't be worth much then."

"Reckon not," said Bill, slowly, "but then that there old treaty's wore out. 'Twon't last more'n a year, specially if there's a good find of gold meantime. You can set your stakes down that there's got to be a new treaty made, and that always means that the Indians have got to give up something. This time, they've got to give up any streak of land that shows gold. You wait and see. We've got to get out now, for a while, but we'll be back again, all correct, and work those claims, just as sure's you live."

That might be, but they were not to reach the shack right away, nor to hitch any mules to that wagon. Their noon halt was only long enough to let the mules feed, and to get their own dinner, and to take another calculating look into the buckskin bag which contained the bits of gold Jake had found in the placer gully. Even after they set out again

they talked about gold until something happened which made them forget everything but Indians.

They had ridden along to a point, on the bank of Crowsfoot River, where a sweeping bend of the stream was nearly clear of trees. Across that bend they had a fine view of the green and beautiful valley beyond, but Uncle Jake gave it only one startled look. Then he put both hands before his face and groaned aloud.

"O Bert," he said. "Oh, the poor, poor fellow! What shall I ever say to his mother?"

"Jake," exclaimed Bill, "there's a perfect swarm of 'em. They're headed down river, too. Our road's cut off. We can't snake around 'em, nohow you can fix it. Bert Raynor's a goner!"

"No way of warning him, and he's all alone!"

Uncle Jake's agony prevented him for some minutes from giving any thought to the predicament they too were in, with a deep stream on one side, mountains on the other, and Indians behind and before them. Bill Adams took the matter more coolly, but he sat right down on the grass.

"This here prospectin' expedition is busted," he said, after a fit of gloomy thinking, "but we've got to do something. It's pretty late in the day.

There's the range, and there's a pass through it, somewhere. Just now we must strike for one of them notches, and lie still till this band gets well ahead."

"We can follow 'em. I'd never dare go home till I'd seen the shack again and got some idea about Bert."

"No more would I, Jake. If they do wipe out that boy, I mean to kill some Ogalallahs, or some other stripe of redskins before I see a settlement again."

Two miners, however brave they might be, were not force enough for an immediate battle with No-ton-thah's band, and the advice of Bill Adams was promptly followed.

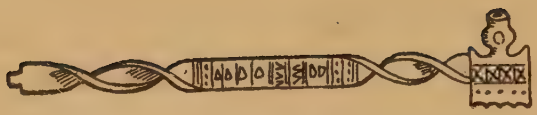
It was easy enough to select a sheltering gap among the foot-hills, and to lead their mules into it. A grassy glade was found, with a spring of water, but it was not considered safe to kindle a fire until after dark, for fear the smoke might be seen by the wrong eyes. The mules were unpacked, the wagon-wheel was thrown upon the grass, and the miners sat down by it.

"Bill," said Jake, "if it hadn't ha' been for that there wheel, I'd be at the shack, now, with Bert."

"Waiting to have your scalp took at the same time," said Bill. "Well, I will say, if you hadn't ha' been quite so contrary, I might ha' been doing the same thing. There's Indians enough in that band to wipe us all out. If we'd been there and seen 'em coming, we'd have had to leave the wagon. What's one wheel, anyhow?"

"They'll most likely burn the wagon where it stands," said Bill.

"O Bert! Bert! I don't want to ever see any of your folks again!"



CHAPTER XIII.

THE GARRISON OF THE SHACK.

Away up north, somewhere, Crowsfoot River joined the Missouri, and lost all its clearness. Here among the Black Hills it was deep as well as clear, but just where its toes parted and gave it its name there was a ford, well known to No-ton-thah and his warriors. They had reached and crossed it, prosperously, and Rain-all-day had asserted that the manitou of the river and all the other manitous settled in the valley were as favorable as ever to the Ogalallahs. They could be changed into enemies by the "bad medicine" of the pale-faces, but not in any other way.

The ford was below the place where Jake Raynor found his wheel and his placer, and the band crossed it at about noon of the day on which Bill Adams was so badly scared.

The best buffalo ranges were known to be farther down river, or northerly, and there was to be no long

halt in any camp before these were reached, lest some other hunting party should be first among the herds of game.

The dog soldiers kept a sharp lookout to prevent straggling, and that was one reason why Jake and Bill rode so near without catching up with any stray Ogalallah.

The whole band was in good spirits, and Little Smoke had never felt quite so well in all his life. He rode all his ponies by turns, and he stared at every old tree and every queer-looking rock, with a vague idea that a manitou might be in it. He would have given more to meet or hear one of them, than to have found a great drove of bisons.

Ath-poh-goh was not having so fine a time. He took no interest in Rain-all-day's legends. He was jealous of Little Smoke. His own mother, Te-o-na-wish, had said unpleasant things to him, and even Burnt Face and Mrs. Burnt Face had reminded him that he was no hunter and had never yet stolen a horse. He looked at Little Smoke and his Crow ponies, and strongly resolved to distinguish himself on the very first opportunity. It was hard that good looks could not be made to answer instead of fame, but he felt as if he had been punched with a porcu-

pine-quill when Na-da-wis said to some other girls, for him to hear: "Ath-poh-goh is not an Ogalallah. He is a Crow. Little Smoke stole him from them and brought him in. The Crows are not good-looking. They have burrs in their hair. They are cross-eyed. They run away from the coyotes."

That was quite prickly, and he made up his mind that Na-da-wis should hear his ka-tun-kah as soon as the band should make a regular camp, so that the dog soldiers would have no right to interfere with serenading. Burnt Face himself now had the flute under his protection, and had improved it in several ways, particularly with feathers and with some red rag-tags combed out into beautiful fringes. He declared sincerely that it was the most remarkable ka-tun-kah he had ever seen. Somehow or other, Ath-poh-goh had scooped out the tube so that it had peculiar powers. It had stolen something from the bad manitou of all the mules and had a mournful bray of its own.

It would have required the most mournful flutes in the world to have expressed the feelings of Bert Raynor when that night drew near. He had about made up his mind that his uncle had either lost his way or been killed. He had no notion how near

him Jake really was, or how bitterly Bill and he were feeling by the camp-fire they kindled after dark. They made coffee and cooked themselves some deer-meat, but they did not feel like lying down. When they did so it was one at a time, keeping watch and watch, ready to jump up and fight for their lives at a moment's warning.

It was a sad night for them, and it was almost as much so for Bert. He also stirred up his fire and cooked supper. He was healthily hungry, but he felt as if he could hardly swallow until after he began to eat. Then he did about as well as usual. He finished his supper, attended to his mules, and then went into the shack and barricaded the door with all the timber he had.

"If they've killed Uncle Jake," he said, "they'll surely come for me. They'll be here at about daylight. Oh, dear!" He had heaped his fire up and left it burning, and now he sat down on an empty barrel before his door-barricade, and peered out into the darkness.

"I could hit anybody that came near the fire," he said, "but they'd be too cunning for that. They'd creep up behind the shack if they came in the night. That's what they would do in the morning."

He arose and took a long peep out at each of the shot-holes he had made. Through those at the sides he could see dimly, for a little distance, but the fire-light did not reach through the shack, and, when he stared toward the river behind it, all was solid darkness.

"An Indian might be within two feet of me," he said to himself, "and I not know it. He could poke a gun into a hole and fire at me. It's an awful thing to be alone! You can only defend one side of the shack at a time."

It was pretty bad, for the shack had four sides. He went back to his barrel and again sat down, rifle in hand, peering out and wondering what was to become of him. He wished, with all his heart, that he had never visited Uncle Jake Raynor, or consented to go a-mining with him into the forbidden country of the Sioux. At last he was tired out and lay down and dreamed a long, long dream of the family in the farm-house near Marietta.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW THE GARRISON HELD OUT.

When the morning sun lighted up the mountain-tops and streamed over the slopes beyond the Crows-foot River, there was yet a great deal of darkness lingering in the deep notch where Jake Raynor and Bill Adams had hidden themselves. They were up while it was very gloomy all around them, and ate a cold breakfast with a great deal of gloom inside of them.

"Bill," said Jake, "Bert isn't your nephew, and I can't ask you to run any risks on his account."

"What do you mean, Jake?"

"You stay here by the mules. I'm going to scout along after those redskins. I've just got to know what's become of him."

"Now, Jake Raynor, what do you take me for? Did you ever know me to go back on anybody? I'm going right along with you."

"You're a good fellow, Bill. Come on then.

The mules won't wander far. They'll stay by grass and water. We can come back after 'em."

"If we run against any Indians," said Bill, "there may not be so much coming back."

"I'm a dead shot, Bill," replied Jake, "and so are you. I never did fire at a human being, but I feel as if I could do it, first thing."

"I could," said Bill, "and I never hurt anybody in all my life. This thing makes one feel awful savage."

"That's what they'll do, if we give 'em a chance," said Bill, slowly, and passing his hand around the top of his head.

Jake only nodded, and they were not long about their preparations. When they set out upon their scouting expedition they did not go out into the open valley, but kept under cover of the forest that fringed the foot-hills of the mountains.

The morning light came also to the door of the shack, and one long, yellow ribbon of it went through a shot-hole in the barricade and reached the face of Bert Raynor, soundly sleeping on the floor. It did not say a word to him, but he at once muttered, dreamily:

"No, mother, you needn't blame Uncle Jake. Everybody said it would be perfectly safe."

Then he awoke and sprang to his feet, exclaiming: "I declare! They might have taken me by surprise!"

They had not come yet, as he knew after a cautious peering out on every side. Then he took the barricade away from the door and walked out. The mules were glad to see him, and sent him three wheezy "good-mornings."

"Soon as I've had breakfast," he said to himself, "I'll try for some fish. I don't know but what I ought to take a hunt up the valley after Uncle Jake. If he's hurt himself or if he's been taken sick I might find him."

He felt better after coming to that determination. His fire was quickly stirred up, the kettle was put on, and then he went to care for his mules. Breakfast tasted pretty well, and he turned over in his mind while eating it all sorts of new and old imaginings of occurrences which might have temporarily detained Jake Raynor.

"He and Bill may have found a new mine," was one idea, and he added, "Anyhow I want to know all about it."

Then the idea of Indians came back strongly, and he decided to do his fishing in a spot that was

completely hidden by bushes. It was not more than a dozen rods from the shack. He took his rifle with him, as well as his rod and line and some grasshoppers, and sat down on the bank. He had to wait longer than usual for his first bite, and the biter was of moderate size. "I can eat another," he said, and he spent some minutes more in angling for that other. It was a trout of a pound and a half, but the catching of him was a mere matter of business, for all the fun had disappeared in the shadowy circumstances which had come upon him.

"I'm going after Uncle Jake—"

He said that aloud, just as he was about to walk out from under the cover of the bushes, but he suddenly stood still and turned very pale.

"An Indian! They've come for me. I needn't go after Uncle Jake, now. Looks to me as if he were only a boy. No, I won't shoot at him, I'll wait and see what he will do."

One boy, seemingly not larger than himself, mounted on a mustang pony, had come galloping on until a sight of the shack and the wagon-tilt made him pull suddenly in.

There had arisen in the mind of Little Smoke, that morning, a great ambition yet further to distin-

guish himself. He was also wild with ideas of the wonderful things of Pah-sap-pa, and he had ridden out of camp as soon as the lodges were down. He rode ahead of even the advance guard of dog soldiers, for they saw no reason to prevent him. On he went, with a vague idea that he might see buffaloes or hear a manitou, or come upon something else that would be "good medicine." Farther and farther his pony carried him, until he saw things that were altogether unexpected, and drew his rein with a surprised "Ugh! Pale-face!"

He saw all that there was to be seen, but there were no human beings visible. An older and wiser brave would at once have ridden back to notify his superiors, but Little Smoke's wisdom had not yet come to him, and his curiosity had. He gazed around for several minutes, unaware how intently he was watched from the bushes. All the fear and hatred for pale-faces which had been taught him, stimulated his burning desire to know the secret of the stone lodge he saw on the river-bank, and at last he rode on. There were the three mules, feeding, and Little Smoke determined to capture them pretty quickly, if he should find it safe to do so. There was a great tumult within him, and a fever all over

him. He rode to the claim and glanced at the work done, and the scattered tools, but did not dismount until he had returned to the open door of the shack. The fire, still burning briskly in front of it, told him that its owner had been there that morning. It was a deep and increasing mystery. He sprang to the ground for a better look at the interior. That was where his curiosity got too much the better of him.

Bert Raynor watched the movements of the newcomer with the most intense anxiety. He saw that the mules were not touched, nor the tools at the claim, nor had the wagon yet been interfered with. It was altogether as if the pony-rider were inquiring, "Is anybody at home?" It occurred to Bert that this might be a friendly Indian, after all, and when he saw him dismount and enter the cabin he at once went rapidly toward it.

"I'll have my rifle ready," he said to himself, "but I won't kill him unless it's necessary." When he reached the door of the shack it had become a trap for Little Smoke. That very much excited young Ogalallah found the cabin empty but not deserted. A fishing-rod, a gun, a case of ammunition, a box of army bread, all these and many other things promised a rich piece of plunder, but on the box lay some very

"bad medicine." Bert had brought some story-books with him to read in the wilderness, and there they lay, in a pile. They were all illustrated, and they were so much "bait" to catch a wanderer. Little Smoke picked them up, wonderingly, and remarked: "Ugh! Pale-face manitou. Rain-all-day talk about them. Tell pale-face all about Ogalallah. Tell him Little Smoke come to see him. Tell him No-ton-thah come. So he run away and save scalp."

The mystery seemed to be partly solved, but the book picked up first came open in Little Smoke's hand and he nearly dropped it, for there was a marvelous picture of No-ton-thah's band dashing in upon a settler's cabin.

"Ugh! Now tell Little Smoke where pale-face gone. No. Pale-face manitou speak to pale-face, not to Ogalallah."

He was spell-bound by what he saw as he turned over the leaves of that book, and he did not know that it had instructed its owner how to meet a friendly Indian. He heard no appoaching footsteps, and he had just said "Ugh!" again when a clear and kindly voice behind him said: "Friend! How?"

Little Smoke had laid down his bow and arrows to look at that wonderful "medicine," but he snatched

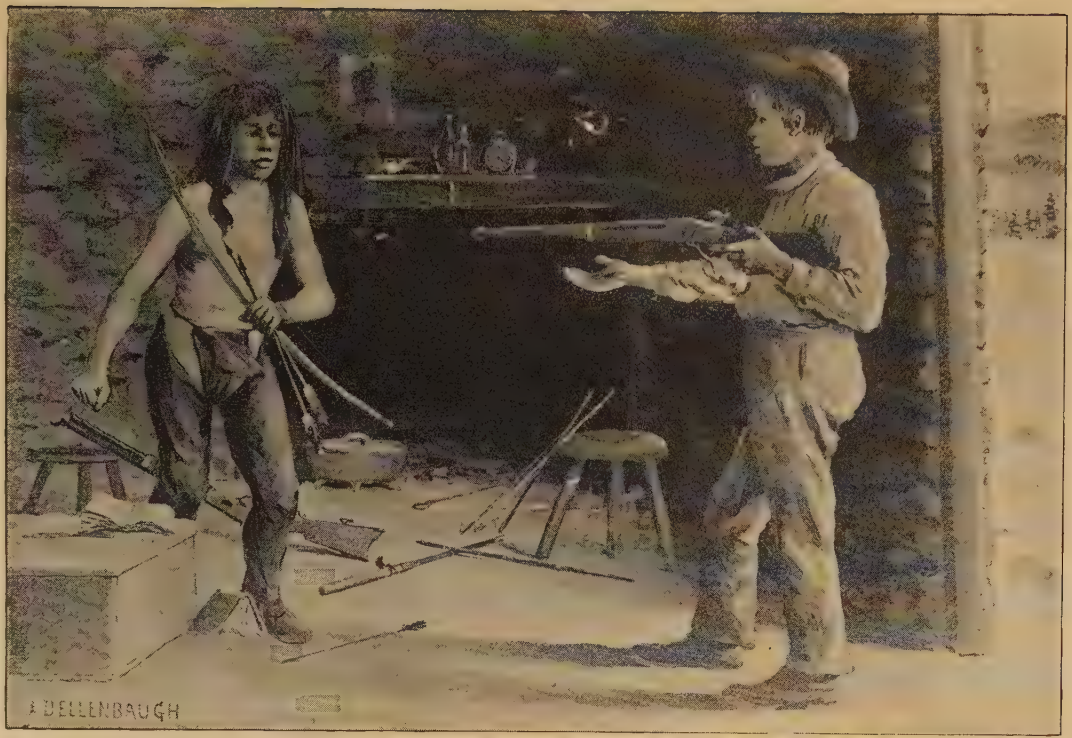
them from the ground as he turned. He made no sound, but he saw at a glance that it was too late to fight, if he had had any such intention. Only three steps from him stood a resolute-looking white boy, with a repeating rifle cocked and raised in his left hand, ready for a sudden shot, while his right hand was extended, as much as if he had said, "Shake hands, or I'll shoot you."

What he said aloud was a repeated, "How? Good friend!"

"Ugh!" said Little Smoke, his black eyes telling only a small grain of his dismay and astonishment, and then he hesitatingly held out his own hand and said: "How? Little Smoke good friend."

Bert shook hands with him heartily, and was glad, indeed, to find that, thanks to the teachings of Burnt Face, his visitor knew English words enough to carry on quite a conversation.

There were many questions and answers, but Little Smoke's dream of capturing that stone lodge, with everything in it and around it, had vanished. He was himself a sort of prisoner, although the only sign of it was that Bert Raynor made him put down his bow and arrows at the door of the shack. He left his own rifle by them, but there was a revolver



Little Smoke trapped.

in his belt, and he felt sure that he was physically a match for even the tough-looking young savage, whom he now invited to come and drink a cup of coffee.

CHAPTER XV.

CHANGED INTO AN OGALALLAH.

Because Burnt Face had begun life as a white man and not as a born Ogalallah, he was not called upon to serve as one of the dog soldiers. There were some things for which he was not fit, or with which he could not be trusted, and that was one of them. A double measure of hunter duty was expected of him, nevertheless; and not only his wife, but his mother-in-law and even his sister-in-law, were well calculated to keep him in mind of his work. They had something to do with the fact that he made an early start on this particular morning, and that he rode out of the camp in search of bisons or other game not long after the departure of Little Smoke upon his search after more adventures and more glory.

Burnt Face had awakened in a bad state of mind with reference to white men. He was more of a Sioux Indian than usual, and when his wife spoke to him about game he replied to her that the Indians

were in a fair way to lose all the hunting-grounds they had left. In a little while longer it would no more be of any use for squaws to send out their husbands after bison-meat. When he mounted his pony and rode away he did not push on very fast, but let the animal take his own gait. His rider seemed to be absorbed in thoughts concerning the wickedness of all these white miners who were coming into Pah-sappa contrary to law. He broke out in strong language again and again, inquiring, vehemently, "I'd like to know what's the use of making treaties if they can't be lived up to?"

There was sound reason in that question, but the whole subject was full of bitterness to any man who looked at it from the Ogalallah side. Just when Burnt Face seemed to be feeling the very worst about the evil doings of the race he had formerly belonged to, he rode out into a place from which he had a full view of the shack and the camp-fire. He saw all there was to see, and there were no miners, but there was something that drew from him a surprised exclamation. Two boys were there, and one of them was red and the other was white. They were sitting by the camp-fire drinking coffee and talking in a remarkably well acquainted sort of style.

They were facing one another, and a broad, flat stone between them served as a breakfast-table. Spread out upon it was a wide-leaved book, and the boy who wore the smallest allowance of summer clothing was slowly turning leaf after leaf with one hand. His other hand held his coffee-cup. It looked as if the white boy were making remarks to his companion concerning what was printed upon the pages as they were wonderingly turned over. Burnt Face knew nothing of all those pictures, and all he said at first was: "Little Smoke! If he hasn't struck it again! He'll be a chief if he isn't skelped before he's twenty-one. The little wolf!"

Then he was silent for a moment before he added: "They've got away in here, have they? Well, it's no fault of mine. I didn't bring 'em here, and their blood's on their own heads. Not one living soul of 'em'll ever get out. They'll find that a treaty amounts to something when the redskins have the enforcing of it in their own hands. But then that there boy! It's an awful long time since I've seen a white boy. 'Tisn't exactly as if he were a man." He sent his pony forward at that, and in a moment more Little Smoke's quick ears warned him, and he sprang to his feet.

"Warrior come!" he said. "Ugh! No. Burnt Face."

Bert Raynor stood still and watched the approaching horseman until he drew rein and sprang to the ground in front of them. Bert held out his hand, and was on the point of saying "How?" when a gleam of pleasure shot across his face, and he changed his intended salutation into—"Hello! You're a white man. Now if I ain't glad to see you—"

"Stop there, youngster," interrupted Burnt Face, with a sternness which made Bert shiver. "Look out what you say. Don't you tell me or anybody else one word, just now, about this mine, or about any man, or about any one thing. If you do tell anything, lie like a freshet. Speak about yourself. Did you surrender to him?"

"No," said Bert. "There wasn't any fight. He kind o' surrendered to me, 'cause I'd cornered him, but he and I are good friends."

"You pinned him and let him up, did ye? Life for life. I'm glad of that. Now you jist surrender to me, and hand me your rifle, right away, so your scalp'll be mine. P'haps I can save it for you. I'm a Sioux. That's my nephew, and you let him up. There's a chance for your life, maybe, but it

isn't any too good, and you do just as I say, or you're a goner."

"I will," said Bert, handing his rifle to Burnt Face. "I'll surrender to you. Have you seen—"

"Shut right up about any kind of questions. Let every other fellow have his chance, too, without setting any wolves on to his trail. Nobody's been heard of yet, and nobody knew you was here. Nobody wanted any miners to come, but if they did come it's their own lookout. I'll sit down with him and you till more of the Ogalallahs get here. Pile your coffee-pot full, and get out all your sugar."

Bert poured out a cup for his strange new acquaintance before he proceeded to put in more coffee and set the pot upon the coals. Little Smoke had seemed to take less interest in the remarks of his "uncle" than in matters around the shack. He saw the rifle surrendered, and understood that he was now free to explore. He was soon peering into the wagon, therefore, and out of hearing. It was evidently one thing that Burnt Face had been waiting for.

"Quick, now," he said to Bert. "Don't change your face, but tell me how all this fool business is. How many of you are they? Where? Go right along. I sha'n't hurt 'em, but the hunters may come

at any moment, and the whole band'll be here in less'n two hours. Little Smoke's an out-and-out Ogalallah. So am I, 'cept that I used to be white, and don't like to see a fool fellow torn to bits just for being a fool."

Bert rapidly explained matters, amid a series of questions and short remarks from Burnt Face. Not one of the latter was in any wise complimentary to Uncle Jake Raynor or to Bill Adams.

"They're safe yet," said the squaw-man, "and they may get away, but your show for it is about five hundred times better'n theirs is."

"Would they murder me, do you s'pose, even now?" asked Bert. "I never did them any harm, and I didn't hurt him."

"Little Smoke? Well, that is something, but if you was a grown-up white man, there wouldn't be any long waiting, unless it was to get to a camp and build a good fire. You'd have an awful time. So as it is, and you're only a boy, that covers a good deal; and you belong to me, that's a strong point. Tell you what you do, though. You shake hands with every Indian that comes, no matter what he says or does, and don't you show any fear or any flinching. When the chief comes, give him that rifle and one of

the mules, just as if you owned 'em yet. You belong to the same family as Little Smoke if his grandmother doesn't say that you can't come in. You watch for that old woman, though. She's awful, and she hates pale-faces like pizen. So do I, most generally."

Bert listened, and his extreme peril made him think fast and comprehend very clearly. He almost understood Burnt Face, but not quite. That the squaw-man was a renegade from his own race, and that he was an adopted Ogalallah, meant vastly more than any white boy could know. It meant, among other things, that he was one of the roughest, hardest, and coarsest of men now, whatever he might have been in some far-away past time, when he was also Dick Wall and not Burnt Face. Bert was keen enough to note that his adviser expressed no sort of pity or sympathy for Uncle Jake or Bill Adams, even remarking with strong emphasis that he hoped every miner would be driven out of the Black Hills. He might have felt differently if they also had been present. As for Bert, his bright, boyish face and welcoming smile had seemed to go away inside of the squaw-man and to hit something. The more they talked now, the more he appeared to be stirred up to the busi-

ness of saving his young captive from the cruel wrath of the Ogalallahs.

Hardly a thought upon all that question had entered the mind of Little Smoke. The prisoner was a prisoner, and the chief would know what to do with him. It was none of the business of a mere boy. If they killed him—well, all pale-faces needed killing; and if they did not, Little Smoke's thoughts had not yet gone on as far as that. He was intensely busy examining everything that he dared to meddle with in and about the shack. There was a line beyond which he knew he could not venture without peril of being called to account by the dog soldiers.

Burnt Face lit a pipe after he had drunk his coffee; but he did not have to wait long before a brace of hunters, full of astonishment and excitement, came dashing into the "claim," and Bert Raynor was given an opportunity to show his nerve. One of them was a very worthless fellow, a mere bloodthirsty brute, but he was a coward also. He actually drew his knife before he dismounted, whooping his savage intention of taking a scalp at once, in spite of any "squaw-man."

"Ugh!" scornfully responded Burnt Face, as he took a stride forward. "Half-ear let boy alone.

Lose both ears. See rifle? Wait for No-ton-thah!"

That was Sioux law, and the blusterer sheathed his knife. The other hunter was a warrior of rank and dignity, and he sprang from his horse and stalked forward without uttering a word or moving a muscle of his face. Bert obeyed a glance from Burnt Face, and stepped out to meet the brave half-way. "How?" he said. "Have some coffee?"

There is as wide a variation among Indians as among white men, and this Ogalallah was really a man. His iron face relaxed into a smile, and his hand went out frankly to meet that of Bert Raynor. The moment the shaking hands had taken place, Burnt Face was free to explain, but Bert understood nothing of the gruff, guttural conversation which followed. His hair did not feel quite so loose upon his head, however, as it had at first, and his anxieties once more turned after Uncle Jake and Bill.

"They're not caught yet, anyhow!" he said to himself, "and nobody's following 'em. They couldn't get back here. I hope they won't try it on too hard and get caught. I'm in a pretty close corner."

An hour later a party of dog soldiers came up and

gravely listened to the account given them by Burnt Face and the others.

"You are safe, now," said Burnt Face to Bert. "Not one of these low-down wolves like Half-ear dare lay a hand on you. That is, till the chief's been heard from. Keep a stiff upper lip."

Everything about the shack was now in the custody of the dog soldiers, except Bert's rifle and one mule. When one of them laid his hand on these with an inquiring "Ugh?" he was answered by Burnt Face pointing to Bert Raynor.

"Boy say No-ton-thah. Mule and rifle his present to head chief. Wait."

CHAPTER XVI.

FROM A CABIN TO A LODGE.

No-ton-thah and his whole band were well on their way that morning, when a mounted brave came racing toward them from the front. So hasty a messenger must have news, and the chief and several of his leading warriors went out to meet him. They very soon knew all he had to tell them about the shack, and the mine, and the captured white boy; but they wished to know more, and galloped on at once. All those who were left behind were speedily busy with twisted and enlarged accounts of the matter, and were full of excitement. Rain-all-day was angry on account of Pah-sap-pa, but was pleased that Little Smoke had somehow done credit to her training, and had been the first to discover the pale-face lodge. His mother was proud of him, and Mrs. Burnt Face was proud that the white captive had surrendered to her own husband. The only member of the family who was not proud was Ath-poh-goh. The whole

band pushed on more rapidly, and not one of them imagined how closely they were watched by two pairs of anxious eyes. Jake Raynor and Bill Adams kept well hidden by the forest, for they had been more than once sharply warned of the peril of any attempt to get past the Indian cavalcade. Small parties of scouts rode along its flank toward the mountains. None were needed toward the river, but the two miners had narrowly escaped being discovered by the others.

"We can't get by 'em, Bill," said Jake. "They'll reach the shack before noon."

"Reckon some of 'em are there now," replied Bill, gloomily. "They've got the whole outfit, and it's all up with Bert. We can't do one thing for him."

Uncle Jake groaned aloud, but he said nothing. There was half a minute of silence, and then Bill suddenly sat down upon the ground.

"It's no use," he exclaimed. "They'll know we're around, somewhere. They'll come for us."

"Bill," said Uncle Jake, "get up. I'm bound to see that shack once more, and find out all there is to know."

"So am I," said Bill, "but what can we do then?"

"They'll hunt after us ahead of 'em, and not behind. We must get our mules—"

"There's more redskins coming from up river!"

"Hide till they go by. Find a ford, cross the river, and hunt our way out the best we can. All the Sioux nation hasn't come. Only a few hunting parties."

"You're right," said Bill, "but the thought of them wolves murdering Bert, while you and I were skulking in these woods, just took all the sap right out of me."

"I'll take the red sap out of more than one of them, if they have. That's one thing I want to feel sure of before I shoot any of 'em."

The good-natured expression had all gone from Uncle Jake's face, and left only the obstinacy, and there was a light in his eyes that had not been there before. Bill caught fire from it, and got up, saying: "I can shoot just as many redskins as you can. I don't know just how many'd satisfy me if I find they've murdered Bert."

Nobody can form any clear idea of how many white men and red men have been killed on account of just such bitter blood-revenges as Bill Adams and

Jake Raynor were talking of. Not nearly so many have fallen in battles.

They worked their way along among the woods and rocks, and when noon came they had climbed a height from which they had a full view of the shack.

"They're all there, Bill."

"So they are, Jake, but they haven't set up any lodges. They're not going to camp there. Do you see what they've done?"

"Reckon so," said Uncle Jake. "They've plundered the wagon and now they've set it on fire. If we were there, they'd be burning us up with it. They haven't got us yet. We can stay here and watch till they get well away."

"That's the checker," said Bill. "Then we can snake it down, and go right to the shack. I wouldn't mind killing one redskin to pay for that wagon."

"We needn't take that old wheel around any more. Bill, I can't help kind o' keep 'hoping they haven't murdered Bert. I've been praying pretty steady."

"Maybe you wouldn't believe it, Jake, but that's just what I've been doing."

"His mother at home's a right down good woman,

Bill, and I can't bear to think of her, but I wish she knew."

"Well," said Bill, huskily, "I'm glad she doesn't. I'll risk but what she's a-praying for him, anyhow. He's the best kind of boy."

The two rough, hard-handed, kind-hearted men sat down on a rock and watched while the wagon burned away and till No-ton-thah's band gathered its droves of ponies from their noonday feeding and began to move on down the valley. There were a great many things which they might have said, but they hardly uttered a word. Twice, when Uncle Jake opened his mouth and it seemed as if he were going to speak, there was only a sort of gurgle in his throat and he had to stop. Bill nodded and turned his head away, for each knew what was in the mind of the other: "They may be torturing Bert now."

The torment of uncertainty was the severest part of what Bert was really undergoing. He even felt a strange kind of excitement and buoyancy of spirits. He was certainly having adventures of a very uncommon description. A courage he had never felt before seemed to be growing within him. He recalled from memory all he had ever read of the heroic conduct of men who had been captured by the Indians. He

remembered Captain John Smith, and wondered if No-ton-thah would imitate Powhatan and order him to be killed. If so, he thought it hardly likely that another Pocahontas would come to rescue him. On the whole, he had more confidence in Burnt Face.

Little Smoke kept away after the arrival of the first dog soldiers, but stuck to the "picture-medicine" book. That and a fishing-line and some hooks were all of the plunder of the shack and wagon which had fallen to his share. He was in a great state of jubilation, but found himself drawing a mental distinction between Bert Raynor and the kind of pale-faces it was his born duty to hate. All the talk of the older braves, however, was growing more bitter, and it may have been a good thing for Bert that he had such black hair and so very dark a complexion.

It was time for him to muster all the wits he had and all his courage, for No-ton-thah and his warriors now came dashing up. Dignity required that the chief should hear from others a full report of all things they had heard and seen before himself speaking to the prisoner. He received his most complete account from Burnt Face, and Little Smoke did not feel nearly so well when No-ton-thah grimly said of

his story: "Old chief see. Little Smoke in lodge. Pale-face boy trap him like a muskrat. Not hurt good little Ogalallah."

Then he said to Burnt Face, "Bring boy here."

Bert was waiting, and Burnt Face said to him: "Come right along. Lead the mule up. Fetch along the rifle."

Bert felt his heart flutter, but he straightened himself bravely and did as he was bidden. It seemed to him that he had never seen a larger Indian than No-ton-thah, although the chief was really not quite six feet high. He led forward the mule until he could hold out the halter end and offer it with the rifle. He did it silently, looking straight in the face of the Sioux leader, and for one moment there was no reply. The face of No-ton-thah was cloudy with bitter wrath against all white intruders upon Pah-sap-pa, and his fingers had been working the handle of his long, keen bowie-knife. Burnt Face had no right to his prisoner which could have prevented the chief from executing Indian justice on the spot.

Bert's hand did not tremble, and his eyes did not quiver from their frank, open friendship, but then he did not know precisely what an ordeal he was undergoing.

A moment of suspense.

Burnt Face was a squaw-man, an adopted Ogalallah, hardened to all that belongs to a life among savages. He had been hardened before he went among them, or he could not have done that. Nevertheless, he held his breath for that short moment before Noton-thah made up his mind. He said to himself: "Isn't he a plucky youngster? Not many white boys could do it. It's all up with him if the chief grips his knife-handle again."

He watched yet more closely for the sign of what was coming. The hard, strong fingers did close again, and the knife came half-way out of the sheath. Then they relaxed, slowly, and a different look came into the fierce eyes and deeply-wrinkled features. He reached out and took the rifle and the halter of the mule with his left, and then his right was extended, palm up.

"Ugh!" he said. "Pale-face heap rascal. Steal Sioux land. Boy not know, and come along. Heap fool. Shake hand. Go to Burnt Face lodge. Chief say more by and by."

Bert shook hands. He would have said something more than "How?" if he could have thought of anything to say, but he felt as if something were choking him. He was only a boy, after all, and a

mental picture of himself at a stake, burning up, had passed away in a side glance at the look and nod sent him by Burnt Face.

"Ugh!" said No-ton-thah. "Boy go now. No speak."

Burnt Face beckoned, and, as soon as he and Bert walked away a few steps, he said to him: "Well, young man, you've had a little the closest shave anybody ever did have. It was touch and go. I wouldn't have given a dog's ear for your life till the chief drove his knife back and took the mule."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TWO MINERS.

Jake Raynor and Bill Adams, away up there on the ridge, could only get a vague and general idea of what was going on along the river-bank by the shack. As soon, however, as the main body of No-ton-thah's band marched away, leaving the "claim" behind, they felt safer to work their way down for a nearer look There was still a squad of "dog soldier" braves to be seen, watching the flank and rear and preventing stragglers from loafing too far. It was necessary to escape the searching eyes of these keen-eyed scouts. One glimpse of a white man would have set the war-whoop going, and there would have been no possible escape.

It was the middle of the afternoon, therefore, before Jake and Bill came out among the rocks around the mining claim. Sheltered by those, they could make a careful survey of the cabin and its surroundings.

"They've all clean gone, Bill," said Jake. "We can venture out."

"They haven't touched the tools."

"What can a Sioux Indian do with a pickaxe or a shovel? They didn't carry off the mine either. We can file our claim and hold on to it and the placer too."

"What good'll they be, Jake Raynor, with redskins around?"

"Just you wait till there's another treaty. 'Twon't be long. They've got to give up the Black Hills. They'll get good pay for it."

"There'll be a war first," said Bill, doubtfully, "and our claim'll wait a good while."

"There always has to be a war before there's a new treaty," replied Jake. "It's been the way from the first settlement of America. After every war the Indian frontier line isn't where it was, no matter how the war began."

"Let's go out now, anyhow— Jake, what's the matter with you?"

"Don't speak of Bert just now, Bill. I can talk of 'most anything else in the world."

He had tried to, and now he went very calmly and steadily about the work of getting news from his lost nephew.

The roof of the shack had been set on fire, and had burned away. So had nearly all the wood-work of the wagon.

"If we had it in the settlements," said Bill, "there's enough of it to pay to build it over again."

"'Tisn't there, Bill," said Jake. "They've carried off everything they could pack on a pony. There isn't any sign of blood—"

"Not a spick, and there would be. Some of him would be here. He's a prisoner, Jake. That's the last we'll ever hear of him. No use to follow as large a band as that is."

"Reckon you're right, Bill. Maybe they wouldn't hurt a mere boy like him. Can't say, though. Maybe they would, some time. Our only way is to go in, best way we can get in, and report him to the army commanders."

"They might do something. I've known of prisoners being given up safe and sound."

"What shall I say to his mother, though?"

Poor Uncle Jake's features were working terribly, but there were no tears in his eyes. Bill did not answer for a moment, and then he said: "No use in our loafing here, Jake. We'd best get under cover and go for our mules, just as we said."

"I'm ready, Bill."

They were both very ready, and they set out with a sort of feverish energy, traveling more than twice as fast as when they skulked from tree to tree along the edge of the forest, watching the movements of No-ton-thah's band. They had to spend that night as best they could, however, for they had not reached their mules and provisions, and dared not fire a shot at game. It was well into the forenoon of the day following when they cautiously re-entered the deep gap of refuge in the mountain-side. There were the mules, safe and sound; but the moment they saw their human friends, the long-eared fellows expressed their good-will for them in a manner which drew from Bill Adams: "I wish mules didn't know how to bray. They haven't any kind of sense."

"No Indians nigh enough to hear 'em," said Uncle Jake, "but we must go and see what's between us and the river."

"We won't take along any bray till we know if there's war-whoops ready to answer it," muttered Bill, and it was very good prudence. Not more than twenty minutes later he and Jake were peering out from some thick willows, and he was remarking: "Reckon they're the same lot of redskins I rode

away from. It's only a small band, not half so large as the other."

"They'll go by fast enough. We'll wait till they've left a long gap behind 'em, though, before we ride out into the open."

"It'll be risky traveling, then," said Bill. "Now let's go back and get something to eat. Don't I wish I knew what was going to be done with that there boy!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

BERT RAYNOR'S NEW GRANDMOTHER.

Burnt Face was not master of the question of admitting a new member into his lodge. Under the family law of the Ogalallahs there were others to be consulted. He was by no means sure, as yet, of the treatment Bert might receive from unruly and vindictive braves. While he had little doubt what answer would be made by Mrs. Burnt Face or even by Te-o-na-wish, he felt very uncertain concerning the temper of Rain-all-day, for this mining party had been intruders upon Pah-sap-pa itself. He advised Bert to keep as near him as possible. Now No-ton-thah and the old warriors were not too near, Little Smoke seemed disposed to do the same, for he had a cloudy idea, in spite of being put down by the chief, that he deserved some glory, and had had a part in the capture of that boy pale-face.

The empty shack and wagon were now on fire, and the plunder was in process of distribution.

Uncle Jake was a man who provided against mishaps, and among the discoveries made by the plunderers had been an absurdly large supply of sticking-plaster. The package containing it was torn open by a peculiarly ferocious-looking brave, and he was studying it at the moment when Rain-all-day and her household were drawing near. He partly understood the nature of the strips of yellow cloth, but he at once brought them to Burnt Face for a more perfect explanation. One was given, but it seemed to operate as a suggestion of evil. Where so much plaster had been provided for wounds, the savage thought was that a supply of wounds should be prepared for at least some of the plaster. A ferocious smile shot across the grim face of the red warrior. He picked up a small, sharp-edged fragment of quartz, and turned toward Bert.

"Pale-face cut skin," he said, in pretty good English. "Put new skin on right away. Ugh! To-da-le-ta-he-gah find out if boy know how."

"Stand firm!" hissed Burnt Face, but a light was rising in the dark, brave eyes of the boy from Ohio. The coldly cruel grin widened upon the face of the cowardly savage as he slowly drew the sharp quartz across the right cheek of the helpless prisoner. The

cut was deep and the blood sprang freely, but Bert did not flinch. To-da-le-ta-he-gah drew back to take a pleased survey of his contemptible piece of work, and then he again lifted the piece of quartz. It seemed to hover over the white boy's face for a moment, in doubt as to the right spot for mischief, and then it came down upon the broad, fair forehead, making a bleeding X, with a hard, pitiless, slowly-tearing pressure.

"Ugh!" That do. Boy put on new skin. Old skin cut easy."

"Do it," said Burnt Face, handing him a sheet of the plaster.

Bert took out his pocket-knife, cut first a strip for his forehead and put it on, holding it firmly until it adhered, and then he did the same for his damaged cheek.

"Ugh!" exclaimed the warrior, holding out his hand to Bert. "Good! To-da-le-ta-he-gah like boy. Heap new skin. What Rain-all-day say?"

There she stood, tall, grim, gaunt, gray-headed, dark-faced, muttering strange sentences in her own and in other tongues. She was the only squaw in the band, perhaps in the whole tribe, whose opinion would have carried weight in such a matter, and

there was a double reason why her answer was of importance in the present case.

"Ugh! Bad medicine!" she said, in a sort of stern severity. "Boy-whose-face-was-cut-with-a-stone turned into Ogalallah boy now. Keep him in lodge. Not kill him any more."

Bert himself did not obtain any new idea from what she said until it was explained to him by Burnt Face: "She is a great medicine-woman. He has marked you with marks that belong to her family. It's almost a kind of token. You are branded."

While Rain-all-day and Burnt Face were speaking, Bert's face was paining him tremendously, but he managed not only to hear the explanation, but to hold out his hand to To-da-le-ta-he-gah.

"How?" said the latter. "Boy feel good?"

"Ugh!" responded Bert, vigorously. "Sharp stone heap bad medicine!"

"Bully for him!" exclaimed Burnt Face. "I'll bet on him! That boy is clear grit. The chief saw it done, too."

Rain-all-day was now staring hard into the eyes of the unexpected prisoner, who had somehow gained a claim to admission into her own family circle. She hated all pale-faces with a bitter, undying, unsparing

hatred, and yet she had been compelled to accept a pale-face for a son-in-law, and here had come another. She uttered a string of guttural sentences in the Sioux tongue, but she did not speak a word in English.

"Bert," said Burnt Face, "It'll be a good while before you can tell your own Ogalallah name. She is your grandmother. You can call her Rain-all-day until you can say it in Sioux. That's my wife, Mrs. Burnt Face. Her other name would break your jaws for you. That's your aunt, Little Smoke's mother, Te-o-na-wish."

Bert held out his hand to Rain-all-day, and she took it, again repeating the Sioux syllables which meant "The-boy-whose-face-was-cut-with-a-stone." He mastered enough of it then, and afterward, to call himself Ke-o-na-wagh, for there was a sort of cough or bark at the end.

The squaws drew back suddenly, for No-ton-thah came stalking up. He said something very stern and harsh to To-da-le-ta-he-gah, for that hideous brave had been guilty of a breach of Sioux regulations. He had tormented another brave's prisoner, after the chief himself had decided not to hurt him. No penalty was imposed, but the culprit skulked away, to be

again rebuked by the "dog soldiers," who were supposed to have care of all prisoners.

It was a good thing for Bert, as Burnt Face told him. He was in no further danger of being harmed by anybody, for the chief himself shook hands with him again, saying: "Medicine-cloth good. Ogalallah get hurt some day. Boy all right."

He turned away again, and Bert was left to complete his acquaintance with his newly-made friends. Quite a number had witnessed the plucky manner in which he had taken the brutal cutting, and all agreed that he was entitled to respect. He was the kind of boy to become a brave, some day. The very squaws who said so, however, would have cheerfully picked him to pieces with flints, if it had been decided to make that disposition of him The best of them had not the faintest idea that there could be any evil in torturing a prisoner. It had been the custom of their race for ages. Pretty Na-da-wis herself saw the cutting done with an amused look upon her face, and made merry remarks about the plaster. She said to Ath-po-goh: "Go get cloth a heap. Stick ugly face all over. Look better then. Cover up mouth. Keep it shut hard."

Ath-po-goh had captured nothing at all that day,

so that it was like nearly all the other days of his lazy, useless life. He had enough of jealousy to say in reply: "Burnt Face take prisoner. Not Little Smoke. Ath-po-goh take pale-face scalp, some day."

"Ugh!" said Na-da-wis. "When he find it on a log. Ath-po-goh hide in grass, see pale-face come."

That was every way likely, but the declaration made him walk away with an air of sulky pride and a feeling of injured importance that kept his head up and made him throw his shoulders back.

There was no danger whatever that Bert Raynor would try to run away. When the time came for him to go along with the band, he was provided with a pony by Burnt Face, and received some advice; part of it was: "Pass right on as if you were at home and liked it. Talk with anybody. You'll be watched, but there can't be a finger laid on you now."

"What is your white name?" asked Bert. "I'd rather call you by it."

"I ain't a white man any more. Not while I'm with the band. If I ever had any other name, it's forgotten just now. I'll give you one more good warning: Don't ask too many questions of anybody. Keep your eyes peeled and your ears open and your

mouth shut. I've got to go and see the chief now. He's sent for me."

He went, but it was not for a long conversation. There was no nonsense about No-ton-thah, and he had a keen eye to business.

"What about boy?" he said, soon after Burnt Face came to him. "Keep him?"

"Half Ogalallah now. Half prisoner. All prisoner when blue-coat chief say for how many ponies. Take him in, then."

"How many, Burnt Face think?"

"Two for No-ton-thah. One for Rain-all-day. One for Burnt Face. Boy got friends. Friends have ponies. Ogalallah no fool."

"Ugh! Keep boy till then. Burnt Face all right."

The wise chief chuckled a little. He had taken a liking to his young white captive, now that he had held back his own hand from knifing him. He also had a strong liking for ponies and presents, and was quite sharp enough to feel sure of getting some for returning the boy whom he had found all alone among the Black Hills. There would be a very good story for him to tell to any Government agent with whom he might some time make a bargain.

"Bert is safe now," said Burnt Face to himself.

CHAPTER XIX.

STOCKINGS FOR MULES.

Every hope they had for getting out of that scrape alive called upon Uncle Jake and Bill Adams to move with caution. They were almost too heavy-hearted to move at all. They had lost a mine, a ranch, a placer, an outfit, and Bert Raynor, and were entirely uncertain what they were to lose next. They went back to the place where they had hidden their mules, and waited there until noon to give all the loose braves of the band they had seen a fair chance to get past them, down river.

"Now, Bill," said Uncle Jake, "I guess the coast must be clear. We'd better start. I sha'n't let any grass grow under my feet. I want to get to some army post and report about Bert. I've got to write home to his folks, too, and tell 'em he's a prisoner."

"I just hope he is," said Bill, "but I don't know. We saw 'em fire the shack, and we saw the wagon a-burning."

"We can be glad we wasn't burnt up with 'em, Bill," said Jake. "He's a boy, and he didn't show fight, and he's a prisoner. I've made up my mind to that; but it'll be awful to write that letter, and it'll be awful for his mother to get it. They wouldn't have made any prisoners of you or me."

"You bet!" exclaimed Bill. "That's what I mean. I know 'em. It's war, so far as we are concerned. If you and I meet any Indians, it won't be any time for nonsense."

"Reckon not," said Jake, with a hard, hoarse rasp in his throat. "I mean to keep away from 'em, but if we do meet 'em—well, you're right about it, and I guess ye'll know what to do."

It may be that his intentions were peaceable, but he and Bill Adams were in a very unfavorable piece of country for that sort of good intentions. There was a sort of peace between the United States Government and the several Indian tribes, but there could not be any peace between the Sioux and any white man whom they might find trespassing in Pah-sap-pa.

If a white man in the settlements is caught stealing anything from the land of another white man he is compelled to pay damages, if he has anything to pay with, and to suffer the penalty provided for by

the law. When a white man undertakes to steal from an Indian, not only what is upon or in the land but the land itself also, Indian ideas of the damages and the penalty are such as belong to his race and education. The red men are terribly cruel and short-sighted judges; but, then, all who venture within their reach know what they are.

The two miners packed their mules and led them down to the edge of the forest, but when they got there they felt more than a little hesitation about venturing farther.

"Jake," said Bill, "let's make a scout as far as that head of brush and look around a little. Leave the mules here."

"Guess we'd better," replied Jake. "We can reach it safe enough."

It was a pretty dense copse of hazel, a couple of hundred yards out from the forest line, and it was well for the two white men that they took advantage of its ambush. It was not quite so well for another pair of men. The land beyond the "brush" extended in grassy rolls to the forest growth along the river-bank, so that a watcher hidden among the hazels had a clear sweep before him. Back along the trail left by his own band came one of the Sioux hunters,

and he drew rein within twenty paces of the lair where Jake and Bill were crouching. He was not thinking of them. He was looking northward steadily, and seemed to be waiting the arrival of somebody. Very still he sat, and almost breathlessly they lay and watched him. Not many minutes passed before the waiting was explained, for there was a thud of hoofs, and then another brave drew rein, as if it had been agreed upon that that meeting should be upon that very spot. There had been no plan or expectation, for the two Indians belonged to different bands, and there was a ceremonious hand-shaking between them. Then there was much talk, but the latest arrival had altogether the most to say. His expressive gestures made much of what he said almost plain to the watching, listening white men. He related matters which had occurred at a distance, far away to the eastward of the visible mountain-range. He and his band had been there and had found pale-faces digging for gold. There had been a surprise planned, an attack had been made and had succeeded, and the pale-faces had been wiped out. Two prisoners had been taken and had been tortured to death at the stake. Fiercely, eloquently animated, became the rapid pantomime of the warrior, as he went on with his story of

how the intrusion into Pah-sap-pa had been avenged. His face, his hands, his feet, seemed to talk, and the brave to whom he spoke grew as excited in listening, until at last the narrator offered a ghastly proof and illustration of his own share in the bloody tragedy He drew from under his blanket a scalp which had evidently been taken recently from some gray-haired white man, and the two joined in a fiercely exulting whoop of savage triumph.

"Bill," whispered Jake, as he leaned forward a little among the hazels, " you take the fellow on the left. I'll take the other, and no missing."

" All ready, Jake," said Bill. "Now!"

The two rifles cracked hardly half a second apart, and the two braves seemed to utter but one yell as they reeled and fell from their frightened ponies.

"Got 'em both, Bill," said Jake. " Lie low for a little and make sure the coast's clear. I never drew a bead on a man before in all my life, but I couldn't help it this time."

"You held straight, anyhow. So did I, and I'm glad of it. Some fellows just like you and me, that was prospecting, quiet and peaceable and not doing any harm to anybody, was set upon and murdered,

and two of 'em was burned alive. This 'ere's only a beginning of justice, Jake Raynor."

It belonged to the dark and evil way of all wars with the Indians, and very little more could be said about it. Wrong had led to wrong in a long series, and nobody could say where the evil began or where it was likely to end.

The two friends waited patiently and silently for a while, but no more Indians made their appearance. The reports of the two rifles had reached no other ears.

"Come on, Bill," said Jake, and they ventured out to examine the results of their sharp-shooting. Jake examined the gray scalp with care, and remarked: "I reckon that poor old fellow was murdered about a week ago. It's getting pretty dry now. His luck was better'n that of the fellows they caught and tortured."

"Reckon that's so," said Uncle Jake. "I don't believe they'd serve a boy like Bert in that way."

"Course they wouldn't," said Bill.

"Well, so it seems to me, but then a redskin isn't altogether human, and they might. They sha'n't ever take Jake Raynor a prisoner, now you bet on that. I'll die where I stand."

"So'll I," explained Bill, "and I'll die shooting straight. We don't want to catch those ponies, do we?"

"I never did steal a hoss," remarked Jake.

"No more did I ever shoot a man," said Bill, thoughtfully. "They're good ponies."

"No time to spare," said Jake, "but we do want this here blanket and that buffalo-hide."

"We want the revolvers and knives, Jake; but what's your notion of the hide and the blanket?"

"Bill, if our mules don't make any tracks they won't leave any trail. We'll put stockings onto 'em."

Bill agreed to it at once, and they went for their mules and set about it; but it was all they could do to make their most intelligent mule wear his socks, or walk in them on more than two feet at a time. They had not before known how loud that mule could squeal, or how high and in how many directions he could kick. He was tired out and fairly quiet by the time the other two were attended to. The blanket and the buffalo-hide cut up into just enough pieces to cover the feet of all three, and Bill remarked: "Now, Jake, we'll leave 'em the biggest kind of a puzzle. We must go right after the band."

"That's so," said Jake, and they rode on until they came to the broad, well-marked trail left behind them by No-ton-thah and his braves, and their quadrupeds.

"This'll do, first rate," said Bill. "What marks we make won't ever show among all these. Now, we want a ford, and when we git across we'll be half-way safe."

That very trail, followed back, led to the ford by which the band had crossed Crowsfoot River, and not one sign of danger was met by Bill and Jake in reaching it. They made no pause until they rode out upon the other side, and then they halted and looked back.

"Bill," said Uncle Jake, "we did wrong to shoot that brace of redskins, maybe. If Bert's a prisoner, we've done all we knew how to make 'em bitter against him."

"Reckon it isn't the same band," said Bill, thoughtfully. "Besides, you know what they did to them other fellers. I don't s'pose it'll make much difference, anyhow."

Perhaps it might have done so if the hunting party to which the first brave belonged had not purposely avoided joining No-ton-thah. The other was a sort of messenger, bringing news of importance to

all Sioux. Another like him, bearing more news, came along three days later and found the two bodies lying where Bill and Jake had left them. All in vain did he report the fact that angry braves might strive to find the trail of the unknown enemy. There were tracks of the boots of white men all around the spot itself, but the stockinged mules had left no trail to be followed.

CHAPTER XX.

KE-O-NA-WAGH RAYNOR.

Bert Raynor's cheek and forehead pained him a great deal during the remainder of that day's journey, but he did not care much whether they did or not. He was sick at heart, and yet he was determined to follow the advice of Burnt Face, and not let the Indians get an idea that his pluck was failing him.

The change in Bert's circumstances had been sudden and it had been awful. His dream of a gold-mine was gone, and so were the ranch, and the cattle, and the horses, with all the fruit trees and vines, and the house, and the prospects of a new town and a seat in Congress. There had been no dream left, worth mentioning, from the moment when Little Smoke rode in to take a look at the shack and the improvements.

Bert was dreadfully uncertain as to his own safety, from hour to hour, and he was full of anxiety

about Uncle Jake and Bill Adams. Some brave or other might at any moment come whooping in with the worst kind of news. The thought would come, also, every now and then, that it would be a long, long time before any tidings of his own whereabouts could reach his father and mother. He had had such a tremendous letter to write to them, and now—well, it was the worst kind of a downfall. Only a few days ago he had been all one bubble with the excitement and romance of a life of adventure among the Black Hills. All the bubbles and exhilaration were gone, now, in spite of the fact that a very remarkable adventure had come. That was the trouble, for there was altogether too much of it, and the cuts upon his face declared that it was real.

From time to time one brave after another rode beside Bert long enough to try his patience with taunting words in English, and with other words in their own tongue, or in Spanish, of which he could not guess the meaning. He imagined, however, that a vast amount of Indian wit was expended upon his cuts and plasters, and upon the fact that he was a prisoner. Some of the squaws remained longer, and said more than did any of the braves; and Bert's idea was that the older and uglier a squaw might

be, the faster she could chatter, and the more faces she could make in a minute.

Even Ath-poh-goh showed that he had some curiosity and could take an interest in what was going on. He came and stared at Bert for more than a minute before he inquired: "Ugh! How face?"

"Pretty well," said Bert. "It feels good. Get a stone and try it on your own face."

Ath-poh-goh did not understand, at first; but Little Smoke heard Bert's waspish reply, and translated it for the benefit of the general public. Na-da-wis and three other girls at once searched for sharp flints and bits of quartz, and found some precisely suited to the purpose.

"Now, Ath-poh-goh make himself good-looking," said Na-da-wis. "Look like Ke-o-na-wagh. Cut new mouth. Cut off nose."

There was plenty of rough fun among the young Ogalallahs, of both sexes, and the younger braves were quite ready to laugh at any snub given to a fellow still younger who was putting on airs before his time. Something very much the same can be seen, now and then, among young people of a lighter complexion.

Mrs. Burnt Face and Te-o-na-wish made more

conversation with Bert, as was their right, than any other squaws, but Rain-all-day preserved a dignified distance. That did not mean that she ceased talking, for her tongue worked on, as usual. Little Smoke rode with her for four miles, to hear what she had to say about the tree manitous who would all have to depart if the pale-faces came to cut down trees. She seemed to have an idea also that mischief had already been done by such miners as Uncle Jake and Bill Adams, going around and making deep holes in the sides of the hills. Even their digging in the valleys was hurtful. She told Little Smoke that the trail the band was following would surely pass near one of the most famous haunted trees, and she would show it to him. He made up his mind that if she did he would go and sit and talk into the hollow and see if any manitou would answer him.

He was only a heathen Ogalallah boy, and he had no idea how very many resemblances there are among all the many sorts of young heathen. The Greeks and Romans, thousands of years ago, had precisely the same superstitions with Rain-all-day about hollow trees and about lonely crannies among the rocks. The Norsemen and the Germans, the Saxons, Danes, Scots, Britons, and all other old tribes of Eu-

rope, believed in more manitous than the Ogalallahs knew anything about. Fairies, and pixies, and dwarfs, and goblins, kobalds, gnomes, giants, undines, and nobody knows how many more, peopled the imaginations of all sorts of pale-face heathen; and the Oriental nations beat them all, and told the wonderful stories which are collected in the Arabian Nights' Entertainments.

Rain-all-day could tell weird and wonderful things about Pah-sap-pa, but she was not ready to tell them to anybody, nor at any time. She even sent Little Smoke away from her at last, and went on muttering to herself alone. He had had a fit of shyness about Bert, but had recovered from it, and was beginning to feel like asking a number of questions relating to the young pale-face and the tribe he belonged to. Burnt Face, on the other hand, as Bert noticed, was disposed to keep at a distance. The truth was, that the squaw-man had a peculiar kind of reputation to keep up, and he could not afford to risk injuring it by seeming to take too deep an interest in a pale-face prisoner.

A good camping-ground was not reached until late in the day, for one had to be chosen with reference to game in its neighborhood if possible. Just

as a halt was ordered, some hunters rode in with the good news that large herds of bisons had been found at no great distance. It was received with shouts of gratification, and, before the excitement it created was over, Bert had learned from Little Smoke one great cause of the bitterness felt by the red man against all intruders upon their hunting-grounds.

"Pale-face come," said the Ogalallah boy, soberly, "buffalo all go. What Indian do then? No eat. Die."

"Plenty of buffalo left yet, isn't there?" asked Bert.

"Ugh! No!" said Little Smoke, with a shake of his head. "All warrior say not so many buffalo every time grass come. Hard find drove now. More pale-face come, dig mine. Buffalo go. Manitou go. Then Ogalallah starve. Go dead. Better kill pale-face."

He had heard that mournful teaching again and again, and so had all the other members of No-ton-thah's band. Nobody, old or young, had spoken more vindictively concerning the dark prospect before her tribe and people than had Rain-all-day, but even she seemed to be almost cheerful that evening

over the uncommonly good game prospect which the hunters reported. There was a very general good-natured feeling, and Bert could see it. Pretty soon Burnt Face came near enough to give him a nod, and Bert replied with—"My face is swelled up so I don't believe I can eat any supper."

"Eat it," growled Burnt Face. "Just you be glad you've got through as well as you have, this far, my boy."

"Is the danger over?" asked Bert.

"Nobody knows," replied the squaw-man. "If you was any ordinary prisoner, there wouldn't be any help for you, and your torture-time'd be pretty close now—"

"That's awful!" shuddered Bert.

"You bet it is," said Burnt Face. "I've seen it more'n once, and I never want to see it again. Some day or other, maybe, I'll tell you more about it, but it isn't that that you're in any danger of. Only something sudden might come, if there was bad news, or if the chief got awful mad 'bout some pale-face deviltry or other."

"What's best for me to do?" asked Bert.

"Eat all you can and keep up your spirits. I won't say I don't kind o' take to you, but I don't

keer to have them know it. I've took good keer of your books, and I may read some of 'em when I get a chance. I've got your fishing-tackle, rod, lines and all, and there'll be something for you to do with it 'fore long. Don't you let 'em see you looking down in the mouth. Spunk up, all the while."

It was excellent advice, and it helped Bert to gather courage and appetite for a hearty supper cooked for him by Te-o-na-wish. She was a great contrast to her mother, Rain-all-day, for she hardly talked at all. He was not quite sure, as yet, whether she or Mrs. Burnt Face claimed to be his adopted mother, or whether the customs of the tribe divided him between them. Both of them seemed disposed to treat him kindly. Burnt Face had further explained his "marks" to him. The chief who had been the husband of Rain-all-day, and the chief who had been the father of Little Smoke and Ath-poh-goh, had each received battle-scars almost exactly alike, and nearly the same with those which would probably be left by the work of the sharp stone. Something like it was in the old lady's family, even further back, and both she and Te-o-na-wish intently examined the pieces of sticking-plaster at supper-time. Bert did not know that they questioned

whether any marks would be left, after all. He ate his supper and felt better. He reflected upon his position pretty calmly.

"I'd a great deal rather be adopted," said he to himself, "than to be staked out flat on my back and have a fire built on me. I've heard of their doing that. Reckon I've got to be an Ogalallah for a while."

He had no possible means for making the faintest calculation as to how long it might be before he could again claim his born right to be a white boy. It was away off in the dim future, and he had plenty of the wildest kind of wild life before him. That night was warm and still, and not a brave in the band slept under cover of a lodge. Bert was glad to be free enough to lie upon the grass in the open air, with a half-awake brave near him on one side and Little Smoke and Ath-poh-goh on the other. His face kept him awake for a long time. He could not help looking around him, and one of the first things he saw was a vacant spot where Little Smoke had been lying. He wondered at it, wearily, for his thoughts were wandering far away to the eastward—as far as to the bank of the Ohio River. Tired, tired was poor Bert, and sleep came to his

assistance, and he ceased to be in trouble, although his first dream made a Sioux chief of him, war-paint and all.

Little Smoke had indeed slipped away from the bivouac very much as if he had been a small snake, for he had strong suspicions relating to a vast and ancient oak which loomed up among the shadows at the northern edge of the camp. He had asked Rain-all-day about it, and she had refused to tell him whether or not there were any manitous in the yawning hollow of that oak. He had gone to find out for himself; and, at the moment when Bert was dreaming of being an Ogalallah chief, the son and grandson of chiefs was creeping through grass and weeds toward the great, shadowy mystery.

Little Smoke's idea of what a manitou might be, or how its voice might sound, was as vague as it well could be, and his courageous young heart thumped tremendously as he drew himself up against the gnarled roots of the tree and peered into the hollow. A man could almost have hidden in that half-empty tree-trunk, and there is no fair method for estimating the room it had for manitous. Little Smoke had made up his mind beforehand what he was to say, and he was just about to say it. In fact, he had

made the right sort of a beginning with a long breath, a sort of gasp, and "Ugh!"—when there was a great scream uttered, right in his face, and something large and white swept over him out of the hollow tree. He rolled over and over upon the grass, but he understood at once that there were no manitous in that tree, at least for that night, or nothing could have induced a white owl to have taken refuge there.

"Ugh!" he said. "Bad medicine. Go back and lie down. Heap owl!"

He could at least say that he had seen and heard the largest bird of that sort that he had ever known anything about. It was to be doubted if all Pah-sap-pa contained a bigger owl, with a louder hoot.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN INDIAN HUNTING-CAMP.

Uncle Jake Raynor and Bill Adams passed that night in safety, on the farther side of Crowsfoot River. When they began to stir around in the morning they were silent for a while. Then Bill said: "Jake, it's kind o' queer. Bert's gone, somehow, and we don't know what's become of him."

"Just don't say much about him, now, Bill," was the reply. "I'd like to know, and yet I'd kind o' rather not. It might be something—"

"Reckon not, Jake," said Bill, hastily. "I reckon he's only a prisoner. There hasn't been any fighting. He's a boy. He'll turn up again, some day."

"You know how that is, Bill. They'll keep a prisoner a long time, but, if there's any chance of his getting away, that's the end of him."

"Can't say, Jake. Anyhow, let's you and I push along out of this country. The redskins have got to give it up some day."

"Of course they have," said Uncle Jake, "but you just mark my words: there's war coming. It'll take more blood than money to pay for the Black Hills."

"They'll never sell 'em of their own free will and accord."

The two miners had seen their cabin and their wagon on fire, and had learned that the Sioux were at work hunting out pale-face trespassers, and their ideas had changed accordingly. They were fully satisfied that it would be some time before any kind of mining claim among the Black Hills would be profitable property. They did not know how much had already been done by other men. Other parts of Pah-sap-pa were investigated that year by men of science as well as by miners. Military exploring parties went into it more deeply than ever before. Speculators laid out "Custer City" and other towns, so that a large number of vacant lots were all ready on maps, waiting for somebody to buy them. It was a curious state of affairs, and it was of special importance to Bert Raynor. So it was to Little Smoke and to all the Sioux nation.

While Uncle Jake and Bill Adams were plodding along, heart-sore and disappointed, that morn-

ing, there was quite a commotion in the band of No-ton-thah.

Hardly had the first parties of hunters set out for their day's ride after great game before one of them returned, riding at full speed. They had met no enemy to turn them back, but with them came a well-known warrior of another band. He was a messenger from Red Cloud, the great head chief of the Ogalallahs, and he belonged to the band of Sitting Bull, their most renowned warrior.

No-ton-thah's band was really a branch of that which obeyed Sitting Bull.

Only to the chief himself could the messenger deliver his errand, but he could utter dark hints of its importance. Burnt Face said to Bert Raynor: "There's something big coming. If it's war right away, it's come at the worst kind of time for you."

Bert could not help turning pale as he looked into the "squaw-man's" hard, sunburned face. There was a sort of woodenness in it, after all, such as belonged to a white man who had chosen to live among savages, and who had, more than once, looked upon their dealings with white prisoners. The thought in his mind, just then, was that Bert had not been "adopted" long enough or strongly enough to pro-

Sitting Bull.

tect him perfectly in case of a "war-dance." Along with that would pretty surely come a "scalp-dance," and all the wild blood in the band would be on fire.

"It may be," said Burnt Face to himself, "that I'll have to give it up and turn him over to 'em. I'd hate to, but I couldn't help myself."

Bert dimly understood the meaning of the scowl which darkened the powder-stains of Burnt Face, and he waited for the next news with a sick feeling at his heart.

The leading warriors gathered at the lodge of No-ton-thah to hear the message of Red Cloud, and Burnt Face was among them. Younger braves even, and all squaws and boys, kept at a respectful distance. The one exception to this rule of savage dignity was Rain-all-day. She was considered to be not present, but for all that nobody spoke to her when she went and sat down with her back against the lodge, hidden a little by it. She wrapped her head in her blanket, however, as a further token that she was ceremonially absent.

No-ton-thah stood in front of the lodge door until he had welcomed the messenger, and then they and all the other warriors sat down. It was a very

long and very dignified conversation, but there was no immediate harm in it for Bert.

All knew that Red Cloud had visited the city of Washington the previous winter, and had seen the Great Father, the President. All knew that he had been asked to sell Pah-sap-pa, and had refused to do so. Now he had been talked with again, and so had the other chiefs of the Sioux and several other tribes, with reference to the sale of the Black Hills country and of all the land westward to the Big Horn Mountains. That meant all the Powder River country, and the hunting-grounds which were fast becoming the last range of the great herds of bisons.

The sum of it all was that the Government of the United States had appointed agents and had summoned the tribes to a great council. It was to be held on a plain north of the mountains, known as Crow Butte, near White River, early in the coming autumn.

The different tribes and bands of the Sioux were to be there, with the Northern Cheyennes and Arapahoes, and it was to be a grand affair. Red Cloud and the other great chiefs had sent out to summon all who had any right to be represented, and the reply to this message was brief but full:

"No-ton-thah will be there, with his warriors and young men. He will not sell Pah-sap-pa. He will not sell Powder River, nor the Big Horn, nor any other river, nor will he let the pale-faces into the land of the Dakotas."

As he finished speaking he heard near him, under a blanket, a muffled voice saying, "When the Sioux sell Pah-sap-pa their manitou departs from them, and they cease to be a nation."

The idea of Red Cloud varied a little from that of Rain-all-day, for he had said, more practically, "If we sell the Powder River country, we sell all our buffalo range, and shall have nothing to eat."

The very region, on the west of Pah-sap-pa, where No-ton-thah's band was now hunting, was part of the territory coveted by the whites.

Brave after brave arose, according to his age and rank, and spoke his mind freely, but Burnt Face said nothing aloud. What he said to himself was:

"They'll get it all, some day, one way or another. At all events there won't be any war till after the great talk. There'll be a heap of hard fighting then, or I'm mistaken."

The council ended and its members scattered among the lodges to tell the news. The messenger

was only to remain overnight, and was then to set out upon another errand with a fresh pony under him.

Burnt Face was detained by No-ton-thah, and it was Rain-all-day who told Little Smoke what was coming. He at once went eagerly and somewhat bitterly to Bert.

"Ke-o-na-wagh," said he, adding the other lengths of that name, "blue-coats want Pah-sap-pa. Come dig gold, build house, cut tree, drive away Ogalallah. Drive away manitou, buffalo, deer, bear, fish. Sioux chief all say No. What Ke-o-na-wagh say, now he Ogalallah?"

"If the Sioux won't sell it, the Government can't buy it," said Bert, and he was understood, but Little Smoke responded:

"Ugh! Great Father big pale-face chief, make long talk, heap steal."

CHAPTER XXII.

GETTING BETTER ACQUAINTED.

Bert Raynor's eyes and ears had been very busy from the moment when he first saw Little Smoke on pony-back. Burnt Face had advised him to be careful how he used his tongue, and one use which he knew would be wise was in teaching it the Sioux language. He began with "Ugh!" but before long he said to himself, "I never can learn to grunt like an Indian."

He made Burnt Face give him the words for pony, and lodge, and river, and some others to practice on, but his best help came from Little Smoke. Ath-poh-goh avoided him as if he had been "bad medicine," but he had a nice lot of visitors that first morning in the hunting-camp.

Curiosity gave courage to Na-da-wis and some other girls of about her age. They came to look at the prisoner, and to laugh and make remarks. Na-da-wis had been to Burnt Face for some English

words and could say: "How face? How like stone knife?"

The sound of that question, as she uttered it, made every girl laugh heartily, and he replied: "First rate. Ogalallah girls like paint on their faces. Not like knife."

There was a ripple of giggling, but he knew that they did not understand him. He did not feel at all funny, but it was best for him to seem cheerful, and he went on with a string of questions about everything he could think of. They laughed continually, and some of their motions enabled him to guess that they were still making remarks about his face. He was compelled to talk and smile one-sidedly, and his left eye was half shut up by his swollen forehead. Burnt Face and his wife and Te-o-na-wish came to listen, and Bert asked him for the names of the girls. Mrs. Burnt Face pointed from one to another, uttering strings of somewhat musical syllables, and when she had completed the list her husband remarked: "Tell you what, now, Bert, those names have meanings. Did you know that?"

"Wasn't thinking about it," said Bert. "Are they what I've read in books?"

"Can't say," said Burnt Face, "but, if you want

to make some good fun, give each girl a new name of your own invention and I'll turn it into Sioux. Begin with Na-da-wis."

He explained to the squaws and girls, and they received the odd idea with peals of laughter, but Bert understood the squaw-man's meaning; everything, large or small, that made him seem more at home, was of importance to him under his very peculiar circumstances.

He pointed at the merry daughter of No-ton-thah, but he could not smile with all that plaster upon his swollen face as he named her, "The Brown Robin."

"That will do tip-top," said Burnt Face, although there were tokens of keen resentment in the dark eyes of Na-da-wis. "Her other name means 'Where-the-brook-ripples.' Go ahead."

Bert pointed at a slender, pantherish-looking girl who stood by Na-da-wis. "Yellow Kitten," he said.

"Good for Little Moccasin," exclaimed Burnt Face, and when he translated her new title the Sioux girl seemed to be heartily pleased with it. So did Silver Ear-rings, as he named the next from a pair she was wearing. Then came a broad-faced, low-browed young lady upon whom her companions had played a rude practical joke. and Bert described her

as "Pretty-girl-with-too-many-burrs-in-her-hair." It was duly translated by Burnt Face into a long string of Sioux syllables, and he had no sooner uttered them than the laughter grew boisterous. They all made so much noise that Rain-all-day came out of her lodge and sternly drove her young visitors away.

"It's all right," said Burnt Face to Bert. "Keep it up Do all you can to get acquainted, and to make friends. You've had the narrowest kind of an escape, best way you can fix it, and there's no telling what's a-coming. Your next best hold is to begin to provide for the lodge you belong to. It's a short-handed lodge, except for having me to look out for it. Ath-poh-goh's too lazy to even catch fish unless he's drove to it."

"I'd like a chance for that sort of work," said Bert.

"I don't keer much for fishing, myself," said Burnt Face. "I'd rather hunt, twenty times over, but then we haven't any chance to get good tackle. S'pose you take your rod and line now, and do your level best. If you should have a run of luck and get enough for half a dozen lodges, do it. They're all kind o' run ashore for provisions during the long march, and they will be till the hunters fetch in

some fresh meat. There hasn't been time to do half the hunting such a crowd as this calls for."

Bert was glad enough to have something to do, especially if it was a job of fishing. When the joint-rod and fine tackle were brought out, Little Smoke himself suddenly began to manifest a deep interest in whatever was to be done with them. He had seen fishing enough, all his life, and he had pulled in many a flopper himself, but he never had witnessed the performances of such a gay and fine piece of machinery as that. He was hardly sure whether or not it could be declared "good medicine." He and the squaws who gathered around remarked "Ugh!" quite a number of times while rod and reel and line were being adjusted. Burnt Face had walked away, and Bert tried to tell Little Smoke that he must have some grasshoppers for bait. It was all in sign-language, imitation, and all that sort of thing, and Bert laughed until his sore face ached before Little Smoke comprehended that it meant "hoppers." He was all alive the moment he caught the idea, and Bert gathered from him that the locust-kind in Pah-sap-pa were believed to be superior to any others in the world.

The squaws and several boys and some girls drifted after the two fishermen and loitered along the

river-bank, and there was much chatter concerning pale-face magic and wicked contrivances, but the general opinion seemed to be that no fish would be caught by "The-boy-whose-face-was-cut-with-a-stone."

Bert remembered what Burnt Face had told him, and hoped that he might be able to do something as a lodge-provider. He felt needlessly nervous over his first cast. The grasshopper hardly struck the water before he was seized by a trout whose weight and vigor were an honor to Crowsfoot River. Work and skill were required to land him, and, when Bert took him from the hook, he turned at once and handed him to Na-da-wis, saying: "Brown Robin? No-ton-thah!" She knew he meant her, and that the trout was for her father, but she sharply responded as she took it: "Na-da-wis no bird. Daughter of a great chief."

She said it in her own tongue, and walked off dignifiedly to her father's lodge. It was a young squaw's proper business to carry home a fish, but she had felt it her duty to snub a boy pale-face who could not talk Ogalallah.

Other fish came, large and small, and the next heavy fellow went to Rain-all-day herself. Mrs. Burnt Face carried off the rest, but Bert had no idea

of stopping while the fishing was so good. There had never been any fishermen there to use it up, and Little Smoke did his whole duty in the line of grasshoppers. He knew enough about hooks and a rod and line, but he was now watching and studying that reel and its management. He felt like hating palefaces who made such things, until Bert handed him the rod and motioned to him to try his luck.

"Ugh!" said Little Smoke. "Bad medicine!" —but he made a very fair imitation of Bert's way of swinging the grasshopper out upon the water. It was taken by a trout, and Little Smoke had to stand still and let him run. Then came Bert's opportunity. Before that trout was on the grass, he and Little Smoke felt like old acquaintences.

Rain-all-day, behind them, was muttering legends of gigantic fish caught in the northern lakes by old-time red men, but Bert did not understand her. Neither did he know that when Na-da-wis carried the trout to her lodge and complained that Ke-o-na-wagh had called her a brown robin, No-ton-thah had laughed at her, remarking: "Ugh! Boy make Oga-lallah. Na-da-wis poor robin. Can't sing. Robin good to eat. Girl good for nothing."

Her mother also laughed at her, and made her

clean the fish for her father's dinner. She did so, but she said half-spiteful things about pale-face boys who wore cloth skins on their scratched faces.

When Burnt Face came to his dinner he seemed pleased, but said, "Pity you couldn't have just such luck every day."

"Guess I could," replied Bert. "The water swarms with 'em. Don't Indians catch fish?"

"Of course they do, but then their tackle isn't like yours. Besides, warriors won't fish if they can hunt, and the boys'd rather loaf, any day."

"I'd rather fish than loaf."

"Go ahead, then. It counts you in as a member of the band."

"Ugh!" said Bert, and he was glad he had learned the word, but it called forth a warning from Burnt Face.

"The more an Ogalallah you are now, the more there'll be left of you in one piece if a chance ever comes to hand you over to your relatives. I'd rather be here than anywhere else myself."

"I'll play Indian," said Bert, but he stopped there, for there was a terribly evil look stealing in among the squaw-man's powder-stains. The thought in Bert's mind was, "I guess there's some good

reason why he'd rather keep away from too many white men."

A Sioux "dog soldier" came along just then with a message for Burnt Face from No-ton-thah, and a dark scowl for Bert.

Both went away, but the scowl stuck in Bert's memory. He felt sure that he was yet in a pretty dangerous position.

"No use for me to try to run away," he said to himself. "If I'm ever to see our folks again, I've got to be an Indian all over till my chance comes. They'd kill me for nothing."

CHAPTER XXIII.

NO WAGON TO DIVIDE.

When Jake Raynor and Bill Adams set out from their second camp they were the best of friends, and all that day they plodded along without any discord. They felt too badly about what had happened to disagree right away about any question whatever. When the next morning came they felt more like themselves, and they even had a dispute about the proper manner of packing one of the mules. He was half packed by Jake when Bill interfered, and before their argument was half done he had shaken off everything on him and was rolling in the grass, braying to the two other mules to follow his example. They brayed back, but they had no packs on them yet, and so they only stood still and looked at him.

That was a sort of beginning between Bill and Jake, but there was hardly anything else to dispute about until noon. They halted at a place where the Crowsfoot River was very wide and shallow. The

sight of a good ford set the matter agoing in Bill's mind, and while the mules were feeding he began.

"Jake," said he, "there's our chance. We can cross here and cut through that gap in the mountains and join the other boys and the military and have a good time."

"Get scalped on the way and not find anybody, and starve in the mountains or get lost among the Bad Lands," replied Jake.

"No, we won't," said Bill. "Don't you get your back up. It's the best chance we've got."

"Reckon not," said Jake, positively. "You're always poking off into something you don't know about. I'm going to keep on due north till I strike the Yellowstone."

"That ain't the river for me," said Bill, and he said it in a way that knocked all the good-nature out of both their faces. They cooked their dinner and ate it, and they argued the matter while the mules were feeding. There was a wonderful amount to say, on both sides, considering the fact that neither of them knew anything at all about the country before them.

Starting-time came at last.

"Come along, Bill," said Jake. "Don't you be contrary."

"Jake," said Bill, "you've got one of your obstinate streaks onto ye again. I'm going to cross this here river by this ford."

"You'll get yourself scalped if you do, sure's you live. Why can't you be satisfied and come along north?" he added. "I'll cross the river, because that's the side to go home on; but I'm going right along down the bank."

"No, you won't," said Bill. "Don't be contrary. Strike for the range with me."

They argued all the way across the the river, and both were sulky when they reached the other bank. Jake marched away down-stream northerly, leading his mule, but did not say a word to Bill until the latter shouted: "There isn't any wagon to divide this time, Jake Raynor. Those two mules belong to me."

"Keep 'em, Bill. I don't want 'em. I'll report you at the agency and say the redskins got ye."

"I'll do the same for you, Jake, and I'll tell 'em you was the most obstinate, pig-headed, self-willed, contrary fellow I ever went partners with."

"Good-by, Bill. You're a good fellow if you wasn't so contrary and quarrelsome."

That was the end of it. Bill had no wheel to roll this time. Jake pushed on alone, making frequent

remarks about Bill Adams and Bert and the Indians. He was in terribly low spirits when he went into camp that night, and he would have given a great deal to know what had become of Bill this time.

"Guess he hasn't found any placer, anyhow. He's a good fellow, but he's awful contrary."

Bill was yet alive, at that hour, and he was lying down, but there were no mules feeding near him. When he parted from Jake he had been a little too forgetful of No-ton-thah's band. He believed he was far beyond it, and so he was, but so was a squad of its buffalo-hunters. They had followed a gang of bisons that afternoon, to the very foot-hills of the range of mountains, near the point where Bill Adams believed there must be a pass. He had believed it more after finding a deep, old buffalo-path, coming from that direction. He had killed one buffalo, packed his mules with meat, and was feeling pretty well. He had just said to himself, almost contentedly: "Guess Jake Raynor'd wish he was here if he could see how I'm getting along. He's a good fellow, but he's the most obstinate, pig-headed—" There he stopped for a moment and changed the subject of his remarks.

"More buffalo coming," he said. "Regular drove

of 'em. Wonder what stampeded 'em to make him come on a gallop. Indians? Hullo! There they come! Can I get to them woods before they sight me? Wish I'd struck for the Yellowstone with Jake."

There was no time to unpack a mule, and it would not have been of any use, for a mule can not outrun a mustang. For more than a mile Bill urged his four-footed friends along toward the timber and the hills. He might have succeeded, as the hunters were bent upon their game, and had no thought of him, if it had not been for one very large and inconsiderate buffalo cow. She ran in Bill's direction as if she were after him, and two Sioux hunters raced after her.

"She's coming!" groaned Bill, and a pair of ferocious war-whoops answered him.

"Got to leave 'em! Oh, dear! But I can reach the timber. They won't ride in among rocks."

Ten minutes later the two mules, packs and all, belonged to No-ton-thah's band of Ogalallahs, and Bill Adams was skulking his way through the forest, afoot and alone, and dreadfully down-hearted.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AN OGALALLAH PEACE.

It began to dawn upon Bert Raynor that a fair amount of hard work could be done, even in so lazy a place as a Sioux hunting-camp.

Even the warriors, young and old, worked pretty hard at their buffalo-hunting, but the real toil came to the squaws. They were under orders from the head chiefs of the tribe, through No-ton-thah, to "jerk" or dry every pound of meat they could lay their hands upon. There might be something worse than even a hard winter ahead of them. What was more, every skin of every animal was to be saved, for trading purposes. Any disagreement with the Government about the terms of a treaty might prevent presents and payments, and so cut short supplies of ammunition. Red Cloud himself was a very clear-headed "statesman," and his people were quite ready to abide by such very sensible counsels. So Bert Raynor had a fine opportunity to learn how the Sioux

squaws dressed buffalo-robes, and tanned deerskins, and prepared meat to be stowed away in "caches" against cold weather needs.

Little Smoke had a very sore spot in his heart just now. He was not permitted to hunt buffaloes. The "dog soldiers" had decided that only experienced hunters should go out. No boys were to ride around and drive away game, but they could be made useful in carrying meat into camp on pony-backs.

It was very little comfort to be told by Burnt Face that the carbine captured on Powder River was a good weapon. Little Smoke would rather have used it himself than to have known that Burnt Face had killed any number of bisons with it. So he sulked and would hardly talk with Bert when asked for the Sioux names of things.

Bert himself had some questions to answer on the evening of the third day. A party of hunters came into camp leading two mules, heavily loaded with bison beef. They had a report to make to No-ton-thah, and then Bert was summoned to take a look at those mules. His face betrayed him, for the chief said at once: "Ugh! Boy know mule. Miner get away. Save hair this time. Boy tell truth. Any more miners?"

"One," said Bert, and then he explained through Burnt Face that he could not guess how Bill Adams came to be north of them when he had gone away toward the south. So had Jake Raynor, and Bert had a better hope now for his uncle's escape.

It was no mystery to the chief, who smiled grimly as he remarked: "Miner lose mine, lose wagon, lose mule. No fool any more. Get out of Pah-sap-pa. Ogalallah not follow him. Keep treaty, keep peace. No hurt anybody. Keep mule. Take care of him till miner come for him. When miner come, say 'Give back mule,' then he say 'Give back hair too.'"

"Go to the lodge, Bert," said Burnt Face. "Bill won't be followed; your uncle must have got away."

There was no misunderstanding the meaning of what No-ton-thah said about any miners who should come back to Pah-sap-pa. Part of Red Cloud's message had been that the blue-coats were themselves driving away all white intruders, according to the terms of the old treaty. There was a great deal of Ogalallah satisfaction expressed at that, but it strengthened the general determination to clear all white men out of Pah-sap-pa.

Bert went back to the lodge of Burnt Face very

much encouraged about his uncle, but with an idea that Bill Adams had a hard time before him.

"Hundreds of miles to foot it," he said to himself; but he did not know Bill Adams perfectly.

It was very warm weather, but Bert had up to this time kept his coat on. He had remarked of it: "If I lay it off for five minutes I shall never see it again."

He was now to learn that the women of an Indian household can take the best of care of its clothing and other property, and also that he was expected to wear the Ogalallah uniform.

Little Smoke was waiting for him at the lodge, looking very importamt. He had a great duty to perform. He did not know the right word for shoes, coat, stockings, or any other article of dress, but after he got Bert into the lodge he made him understand that be must take off and cease to wear everything but his pantaloons.

"Rain-all-day keep," said Little Smoke, pointing at the little heap, after it lay on the ground. "Snow come, then Ke-o-na-wagh want warm. No want now."

Bert felt like shivering, in spite of the warm weather, as he drew his belt a little tighter. Little

Smoke stared at him, all over, and said: "Tender-foot. No good. Ogalallah foot hard. See? Skin soft. Too much pale-face. Sun paint him."

"That's so," said Bert. "Oh, but won't I get sunburned!"

It was a severe trial of his nerves to go out of the lodge, but there was no help for it, and he could not understand the many remarks made upon his first appearance. It seemed as if the face of Rain-all-day grew darker and more threatening when she saw how very white he was. Te-o-na-wish and Mrs. Burnt Face laughed heartily, but Bert saw that something else was coming to him.

Near the lodge were Ath-poh-goh and about a dozen other boys, and their faces promised mischief.

"Ugh!" said Little Smoke. "Now Ke-o-na-wagh come ride pony."

"Glad I can ride," said Bert to himself; "but what are they up to?"

They had bridled a number of ponies and had set apart for him a raw-boned, yellow-coated animal, with a peculiarly wicked-looking eye. Bert had been accustomed to consider himself a pretty good rider, and so he was, with a well-broken horse and saddle. A Sioux pony, barebacked, was quite another affair.

"I'm in for it, if he breaks my neck," he said, as he tried to imitate the Indian boys and spring upon his pony. They all did it perfectly. Bert did it very much less perfectly, and what the pony did was absolute perfection. It seemed as if he only gave a sort of plunging wriggle, and his pale-face rider found himself in the grass. It scratched his bare skin, and he was somewhat bruised, and it was just as well for his comfort that he did not understand the torrent of derisive gutturals thrown at him by the young pony-riders. He was much more sharply stung by the taunting laughter of the squaws of all ages who saw him thrown, and he sprang up eager for another trial. The pony stood still, as if waiting for more fun, but this time Bert managed to stick to him very well. That was about all he could do, and, as soon as the boys saw that he was not thrown at once, they all set off at a gallop. The yellow pony followed them with a plunge and a squeal. They rode hither and thither, wheeling and dodging, and cutting all manner of capers, yelling, whooping, and seeming as much at home on horseback as if they had never been anywhere else.

At last Bert's pony suddenly stopped, of his own accord, and began to kick and rear in a very ugly

The pale-face rider found himself in the grass.

fashion, but his rider clung to him desperately. The other performers in that small circus came charging past him and around him, clutching his bare feet and arms, pushing him, punching him, lashing his pony, and shouting their contempt for pale-face horsemanship.

The pony himself must have been in league with them.

"He is going to roll!" groaned poor Bert. "I musn't fall under him."

The pony meant to roll upon his rider, and the quickness with which Bert alighted on his feet and escaped won him a shout of applause. He had not done half so badly as they evidently expected, and when the pony came up there was Bert upon his back again.

The fun went on, but it occurred to Bert that part of it belonged to him. The next clutch made at him was by Ath-poh-goh, and Bert was ready. He caught his tormenter by the wrist, and in a moment more Ath-poh-goh's pony had nobody on him.

There was a storm of yelling at that, and then a sudden subsidence. Up to that very moment Ke-o-na-wagh had been altogether a foreigner. He was dreadfully white, but the other boys seemed to think

that if he had real fun in him and could pull an Ogalallah boy from his pony, he was not such a wild beast, after all.

Bert was beginning to feel that he could not stand it much longer, when a shout from Burnt Face called him to the lodge.

"Get down," he said. "You'll know how to ride, by and by. Go and catch some fish. When you get just awfully sunburned, rub yourself with buffalo-grease, and it'll get well quicker."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE TRADE THAT BILL MADE.

Bill Adams was not pursued into the forest. There is much prudence in a Sioux warrior, and he knows that a rifleman behind a tree is a danger not to be despised.

"If they'd only ridden in a hundred yards farther," said Bill to himself, "I'd have had them mules back again. Now I must push along, and run my chances for game on the way. Hope it's a good pass."

It was nothing of the sort, but it was all the better for Bill Adams. It was a wide opening in the range; a valley through which flowed a fork of the Little Missouri, into which Crowsfoot River emptied farther north.

That valley was part of the great bison range. It lay partly in and partly out of Pah-sap-pa, but Bill cared very little about boundaries. He shot another buffalo before dark, and had a good supper. It was

just a little after the noon of the next day that he discovered how entirely ignorant were some Sioux hunters of the presence of any white man in that region. They were not Ogalallahs, but they were Sioux, nevertheless. They were Minneconjous. That was another thing that Bill cared very little about; but when he looked down on their camp, from a rocky hill, he soon made up his mind that all the braves were out of it. They had gone away on a buffalo-hunt. The squaws in camp were hard at work, and only two or three boys were watching a large drove of horses and ponies feeding more than half a mile from the lodges.

"I reckon I'll trade for one of those horses," said Bill to himself. "I'll trade the two mules those redskins took. I wouldn't steal anything, but the packs on them mules'll have to count for their cash value. Maybe I can call it another horse."

He made his trade with great skill and patience, and he took no ponies. He crept in among the drove, and picked out two of the fastest-looking horses. He was a good judge of such matters and he selected well.

"It's a good trade," said he. "The Sioux haven't made a cent out of me. The lariats are first rate.

Glad that boy's asleep. Don't want to hurt him. If Jake was here, he could trade on account of the wagon and the other three mules. He'd be here, too, if he hadn't been so obstinate."

Not many minutes later Bill was on the back of one of those horses, leading the other, and galloping hard eastward. Before he had ridden far he was able to assure himself again: "It's a real good trade. They're the best kind. The redskins haven't anything left in that drove that can catch up. I'll get a long start of 'em, too, before they come in from their hunt."

He rode on all the rest of that day, and only rested when it was too dark to go farther. It was just at dusk that the Sioux discovered the absence of the horses. No pursuit could be made till morning. When the morning came and they thought the matter over, they fully agreed with Bill Adams, and declared that a thief so well mounted, having a day's start and riding for his life, was not worth following.

"Ugh!" said the warrior most deeply concerned. "Hole-in-the-rock great chief. No kill pony. Let horse go. Miner get him. Chief get miner, some day."

He had himself stolen those very horses, as well

as nearly all the ponies he refused to use up in chasing Bill Adams, and he felt some admiration for the unknown pale-face who had made so very skillful and daring a horse-trade.

Bill's greatest remaining regret was that he had not been able to trade for a saddle and bridle at the same time.

"I'm doing pretty well," he said, with a dissatisfied scowl, "but it's been a losing trip. I'll see if I can't strike a claim or something. There can't be redskins all over the Black Hills." His thoughts and remarks went back to Jake Raynor very frequently. So did Jake's to him. The mule Jake was riding was a good traveler, and his pack had now been made lighter. One of the burdens Jake did not relieve him of was the buckskin bag containing the dust and nuggets he had taken from the placer.

"There's enough there," he said, "to almost make it a paying trip, but there isn't gold enough in the Black Hills to pay for Bert Raynor. If he's a prisoner, well, maybe he isn't, but if he isn't, I hope he showed fight and got killed right away. It's an awful sort of thing to think of."

CHAPTER XXVI.

DOINGS AMONG THE BOYS.

Little Smoke was troubled in his mind. He knew that all pale-faces were wicked. They were all of them enemies of the Ogalallahs. Even if one of them became a Sioux brave, like Burnt Face, he was not to be altogether trusted. He might turn pale-face again and be more wicked than before.

Little Smoke's bad opinion of the dangerous race of magicians had been strengthened by all he had heard and seen of their purpose to take away Pah-sa-pa. He hated them vigorously, and yet he found himself actually forming a liking for Ke-o-na-wagh. He could not ride very well, but he was plucky, and he could beat anybody else at catching fish. Perhaps he could wrestle. They must try him at that, right away, thought Little Smoke, but he was decided in his opinion that Ke-o-na-wagh would prove a poor runner. He could not run well with boots on, of course, and without boots his soft, white feet were

actually good for nothing. Buffalo-grass would cut through so tender a skin, and rocks and gravel would knock such feet all to pieces.

Bert had told Little Smoke that he could shoot straight with a rifle, and had been answered: "No good. Boy no have gun."

Bert had also been told that he could not hit anything with a bow and arrows, and had determined to practice faithfully. Burnt Face had given him a good bow, and some arrows, and some good advice, adding, "I've got your revolver, but you won't need it any more."

Bert had a hope that he might, some day, but he did not say so.

Ath-poh-goh was also much troubled in his mind, and it was about the dog soldiers and their sticks. He was in doubt whether they considered that camp settled enough for musical purposes. He did not dare to run any risks the first night nor the second, but his mind was relieved then, just as the moon was rising. He lay on his blanket, sulkily longing to use his ka-tun-kah, when he heard a sound which made him spring to his feet. It was something half-way between a wheeze and a cat-call. It was the flute of another musician, and before many more minutes Ath-poh-goh

knew that one of the younger "dog soldiers" was himself serenading the daughter of a distinguished brave.

"Heap pony. Ugh!" muttered Ath-po-goh, for he was aware that four had already been offered for that young lady, and had been contemptously refused. Her husband would have to be a man of property, whether or not he would have anything left after paying for her.

Ath-po-goh listened to that poor, thin, miserable squeak with a feeling of proud expectation. What would people say when they should compare it, or any other squawl they had ever heard, with the blast of his own ka-tun-kah? They were to know what they would think by the same hour of the following evening, but it was a weary day of waiting for Ath-po-goh.

It was something worse for Little Smoke, for he had carried into effect his purpose of finding out whether Ke-o-na-wagh could wrestle. Bert awoke, that morning, a little stiff from his hard riding and tumbles of the previous day, but that soon wore off. What would not wear off was the very painful sunburn, all over his exposed body, from the waistband up. He followed the advice given him by Burnt

Face, and fairly plastered himself with buffalo-grease, obtained from Te-o-na-wish. His feet were not very sore, and there was nothing at all the matter with his hands. It was a good thing for him that he had made himself so slippery. He went right out among the boys that morning, and the challenge to wrestle came all the more speedily because the grown-up hunters had forbidden them to tire out any ponies that day. Bert was called upon to measure heights with one boy after another, until six were found who were declared a fair match for him.

Little Smoke was among them, and his turn came first. He had no idea but what he was about to have the glory of upsetting Ke-o-na-wagh, but there was one thing he had never learned. Man for man and weight for weight, the white man or boy whose muscles are "in training," by labor or otherwise, is stronger than the red man. There are, of course, many exceptions, but the rule holds good. Bert Raynor was a farmer's boy and uncommonly vigorous, and he was also pretty well practiced in wrestling with his clothes on. He was now to try a new way, so far as clothing was concerned, for all he had on above his belt was the coating of buffalo-grease which perplexed Little Smoke. It made the

match nearly even, so far as skill went, and as soon as they both got a good lock-grip, and it became a question of strength only, down went the young Ogalallah. There was a great yelling and whooping all around them, and Little Smoke hated pale-faces more than ever, but began really to respect Ke-o-na-wagh.

The next trial was with a slender fellow not nearly so strong as Little Smoke, and he went over in a twinkling. By that time the match had spectators. Many of these were squaws and girls, but all the boys in camp were there, and half a dozen elderly warriors stood still at a dignified distance, and said "Ugh!" with much force when the third Ogalallah boy lost his hold on the buffalo-grease and was doubled under. Burnt Face walked away to the opposite side of the camp when the match began, remarking: "He must paddle his own canoe. They'll tumble him around rough enough, but they won't hurt him."

Bert was now warmed up and encouraged by his unexpected success. He took a vigorous hold of his fourth adversary, but that boy had watched with sharp eyes, and he had put sand in his hands. His first grip, therefore, had no slip in it, and Bert felt as if two patches of his skin were coming off. His

sore, sunburned sides had already suffered more than a little. The Sioux boy misunderstood Bert's shrinking motion, and thought he was flinching. He broke out into a hasty yell of triumph, squeezing harder as he did so, just when he should have given all his thoughts to his feet. Pain and a feeling of desperation added energy to Bert's next effort, and they also made him yell like a born Ogalallah as he wrenched the pair of brown feet from the grass they stood upon and laid their owner flat, going down with him. It was a fair throw and should have been an end of the matter, but the Sioux boy struggled angrily and fiercely. There was a prospect of a fight instead of a wrestling-match, but one of the "dog soldiers" had been keeping an eye upon it, and he now interfered, saying: "Ugh! Get up. Ke-o-na-wagh heap wrestle good."

He made it plain to them that Bert was entitled to a rest, and was to be treated without reference to his color. He would some day be an Ogalallah brave as much as any of them.

That was what Little Smoke found it hard to understand. He felt that there would always be a wide difference between him and Ke-o-na-wagh. He almost saw through the fishing-rod and reel, and he

The wrestling-match.

realized that they were "good medicine," but the books and the pictures in them were very bad. So was Ke-o-na-wagh's wrestling, and his deep cunning in putting on so much buffalo-grease. He was white, and therefore there must be a vast amount of evil in him.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A GREAT DEAL TOO MUCH MUSIC.

Uncle Jake awoke the third morning after separating from Bill Adams, and found himself very much less afraid of Indians. He had good reason for it, and said so: "I'm clean out of the Black Hills country. All north and east of this is kind of peaceable. No need of striking for the Yellowstone Valley. I'll turn east and get to Fort Pierre. If there isn't any war I'd be safe among any kind of Sioux except Ogalallahs, or among Cheyennes, but I'd hardly like to meet any Crows. Not likely to, either."

Any white man has a right to feel safer while going out of the Indian country than while going into it, and Uncle Jake discovered that fact before sunset. The way in which he discovered it tried his nerves dreadfully, and he puzzled an entire hunting-party of Indians, half of them Yanktonnais Sioux and half of them Cheyennes.

Uncle Jake was plodding along, leading his mule.

He had killed a buffalo cow, and much of the meat had been added to the pack, so that he need not pause again to hunt.

Suddenly, on both sides of him, came sweeping along scores of red hunters, returning from a day of good success among the bisons. Any attempt to escape would have been useless, and Uncle Jake merely halted his mule and waited until several braves reined in their ponies around him and a chief dismounted.

"How?" said Uncle Jake holding out his hand. "Kill buffalo?"

"How?" was the reply, and the hand was shaken, but every pair of black eyes was busy with the pale-face and his outfit. They saw that he had been hunting, and that was all right. He was not a miner, for he had neither pick nor shovel, and he was not in the mining country. The chief asked, "Where go?"

"Fort Pierre," said Uncle Jake, quietly. "Hunt enough. Had good time. Go home. Eat a heap. Chief hunt?"

"Ugh!" said the chief, sternly. "Pale-face heap fool. Meet bad Indian. Lose hair. Then blue-coat shoot heap other Indian."

"Good friend," said Uncle Jake, obstinately. "Hunt a heap."

"Ugh! No more hunt," said the chief, and Uncle Jake was safe. He camped with the hunters that night, and the next morning a very ugly and silent-looking "dog soldier" of the Cheyennes rode on with him eastward. That chief meant to make sure that the scalp of Jake Raynor should not be added to the difficulties already existing between the Sioux nation and the Government.

Bill Adams, that day, was away off in the very heart of Pah-sap-pa. He did not have a solitary adventure between sunrise and sunset, and grew more and more dissatisfied with his horse-trade as he rode along.

"These two are prime good ones," he said, "but I might as well have brought along another. There was a tip-top gray and a good sorrel, 'most as good as these, and the boy was sound asleep, and he wasn't very nigh anyhow."

He forgot that four horses are not so easily managed as two and are more likely to be followed fast and far, but then, as Jake Raynor would have said, "Bill Adams was never satisfied in all his life."

He had the quietest kind of evening, in his lonely camp, and he grumbled at it.

"There's just no kind of music in such a trip as this," he said. "I'd rather be in a big camp."

If he had been in that of No-ton-thah, perhaps he might have been entirely satisfied. That is, he would surely have had enough music.

It was another very warm night, and again Ke-o-na-wagh Raynor, as he called himself, half jokingly, lay out on the grass wrapped in a blanket, with Little Smoke lying near him.

"Oh, how my burns and scratches do smart!" he was saying to himself, when he saw Little Smoke suddenly rise and look at something that stole past them. It was Ath-po-goh, armed only with his ka-tun-kah, bound for a grand serenade. Little Smoke stole along after him and Bert followed them both. He had heard of that flute from Burnt Face, and he was himself very fond of music. He could play a little on a flageolet. He said to himself: "Wonder what it'll sound like? See those dogs! Seems as if there were more of them than in the daytime."

There were five times as many as there was any use for, by day or night; and now, in the dusk and moonshine, their activity seemed to multiply them.

Ath-poh-goh had no idea that he was followed. He would not have cared, if he had known, for he was bound to serenade Na-da-wis, and felt that he could be proud to have the whole band hear his ka-tun-kah. He sat down under a scrubby, wild plum-tree that grew near the lodge of No-ton-thah. Perhaps not so many as twenty dogs sat down within as many paces of him to watch and to see what he would do. Bert believed there were at least twice that number, and in a minute more he was willing to believe that the multiplication-table had got in among them. At all events, all the noise they knew had broken loose.

Ath-po-goh put his back to the plum-tree when he sat down and gathered all the lung power he had. He did not let go of it at once, but aimed what he thought was a moderate toot straight at the lodge which contained Na-da-wis. It must have reached "Where-the-brook-ripples," but on the way it struck a nervous dog, and drew a sharp yelp from him. It was a good beginning, and Ath-po-goh blew now with his might.

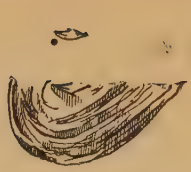
"I see," said Bert, "he made his flute out of a mule's windpipe, just as we used to make squawks with a turkey's windpipe. I didn't know it could be done."

Bert was wrong, but all the dogs within hearing tried to express their opinion of Ath-po-goh's music. Such a howling went up as if they all were in fear of being killed.

"Ugh!" said Little Smoke. "Dog soldiers come pretty soon. Heap loud ka-tun-kah."

"Heap loud," said Bert. "Dogs all die. Ugh!"

Another blast, with fingered variations, brought out another chorus of howling, and Ke-o-na-wagh lay still and waited to see what would come.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

KE-O-NA-WAGH'S TRAINING.

Little Smoke was wrong about the dog soldiers that night, for they did not come to interfere with Ath-po-goh. If they had known that a mere boy was so stirring up the dogs, it would have been dif ferent. All the racket went on for some time, protected by the custom of the tribe in such cases, but it did not bring Na-da-wis or any other maiden to the door of any lodge.

One very old squaw did make her appearance, but Bert was the only one who knew where the buffalo-bone came from which hit Ath-po-goh on the side of his head. He paused at once. If that bone had struck the ka-tun-kah! The thought made him shiver, and he drew back farther into the shadow. He saw Little Smoke and Ke-o-na-wagh and went toward them. He was in doubt whether to serenade any more, and he let Bert handle the flute.

"Ugh! Ke-o-na-wagh"—and he motioned him to blow.

Now there came an astonishment to the camp, and even to Bert.

That ka-tun-kah was no flageolet, but a tune could be played upon it, and one was now playing. Such a thing had never before occurred in that band of Ogalallahs, and now, indeed, the disturbed sleepers got up and came out of their lodges. Some young brave or other had been seized by a manitou. The very dogs declared it "bad medicine" and howled again. Very quickly there were a dozen "dog soldiers" around Bert, wondering how he could get Yankee Doodle or Dixie out of Ath-po-goh's ka-tun-kah. Very large, rough, jagged pieces of both tunes had been blown out of it already, and splinters of other tunes were coming. It was a very remarkable serenade, but it had to come to an end. An older and graver warrior strode toward the plum-tree, remarking: "Ugh! Ke-o-na-wagh go lie down. All boy. No brave. Stop ka-tun-kah."

Bert heard Burnt Face remark, back among the shadows: "They've got off first rate. I reckoned they'd maul him. It was the tune saved him."

That was it, and he was next day called upon to

show to more than one ambitious young Sioux how that finger miracle could be done. The days followed one another pretty rapidly after that, and each brought to Bert Raynor some new and queer experience of savage ways. It was not altogether that he saw what they did, for he began to get some notion of what they thought. He obtained more from Little Smoke and the other boys than he did from Burnt Face, for the "squaw-man" told him, surlily: "You'd best keep away from me. I ain't a white man any more, and I don't want to be. Soon as you get your training you'd a heap rather be an Indian."

Bert made no reply aloud, but he thought of a farm-house on the Ohio River-bank, and said to himself: "Guess I'd rather see mother about it first. I'm getting brown enough, but it hasn't struck in."

It was a very ruddy brown, and the sun was still at work painting him redder. He was fast picking up words of the Sioux language, and Little Smoke was trading them with him for English words of all sorts. He gave up any word longer than two syllables, and Bert discovered the reason. The Sioux words, which seemed so long, were only so many strings of short words tacked together. He found that he could help himself out with "signs" remark-

ably, and that signs or looks would sometimes turn a Sioux word into several different meanings. He did not guess how much mischief had been done by that fact. Words uttered by Indian chiefs in selling land to white men have told twice as much in writing as they were meant to do when spoken.

All the talk of the camp was now turning toward the great council to be held at Crow Butte. When the hunting-camp broke up, the band moved steadily in that direction. There was to be a new treaty, with a grand talk, and presents and payments, and the excitement about it increased fast as the time and the place came nearer. There was but one voice about selling any land to the pale-faces; and when Bert asked Little Smoke, one day, at the noon halting-place, "How many ponies would you take for your share in Pah-sap-pa?" and made his meaning plain by lines drawn on the ground, he was almost astonished to see how the fire glittered in the angry eyes of the Ogalallah boy.

"Ke-o-na-wagh no talk buy Pah-sap-pa. Bad medicine. All pale-faces come into Pah-sap-pa lose hair. Little Smoke big brave then. Fight all time. Ke-o-na-wagh Ogalallah now. Keep Ogalallah country."

Bert nodded a sudden and strong assent, for he saw plainly that if he were Little Smoke he should feel just so about it.

"Ugh!" said a deep voice near them, and Bert looked up to discover that No-ton-thah himself had listened, and had read the expression of his face.

"Ke-o-na-wagh say: "Keep all Ogalallah country? Good!"

"I'd keep every foot of it," said Bert, "unless I wanted to sell it, and got a good bargain. Some land isn't worth much."

He said it frankly, and it did him good, for No-ton-thah turned away with an approving smile, saying: "Boy Ogalallah. Heart right. No sell Pah-sap-pa."

Bert could understand clearly how no Indian would willingly give up his rights, of any kind. Every day, too, something very bitter and burning in his heart told him that he could never give up being a white man. He would much rather die than spend his life among the Indians. He did not wish to be killed, however, and he kept his thoughts and hopes carefully to himself.

So soon as buffalo-hunting ceased to be so much a matter of business and of providing against hungry

days to come, the less skillful young braves and the boys were allowed to take their turn among the bisons. Ke-o-na-wagh had daily practiced with his bow and arrows. He had even got so far along that he could use them or thrust with a lance while riding a pony at full gallop. That is, he could send an arrow at something. Whether or not the mark would be hit was quite another matter.

The day of the "boys' hunt" came, and it was Rain-all-day who said to her adopted grandson: "Go find buffalo. Kill a heap." She brought him a good pony, but when he asked Burnt Face for his own revolver he was gruffly answered: "I'll keep it for you. You're only half-way an Indian yet. Hunt some of your white blood out of you. Be as good a hand with a lance or a bow as Little Smoke is."

There was the worst kind of scowl on the squaw-man's face, and Bert at once decided to be Ke-o-na-wagh completely that day, and hunt with Oga-lallah weapons. He had little hope of killing anything, however. As for Little Smoke and Ath-po-goh, they were in their glory.

Na-da-wis remarked to them: "Ath-po-goh take ka-tun-kah. Kill buffalo right away. Little Smoke

find small calf, tie him up to tree first, then shoot him. Ke-o-na-wagh fall off pony. Hurt himself."

But then Na-da-wis was a girl who made fun of everything and did not conceal her dislikes. She did not exactly hate Ath-po-goh, for he was an Ogalallah, nor Little Smoke, but she was afraid of their grandmother, and could not like any of the family; and she detested Ke-o-na-wagh as a pale-face. She did not believe he ever could become really a Sioux warrior, and she hoped that he and all other pale-faces would be killed, some day, so that they would keep out of the Indian country.

That was a great day's sport, for the middle-aged brave in charge of it led his young hunters wisely. They came upon a very fair drove of bisons, widely scattered over a great, natural prairie pasture. That scattered the boys, but Bert deemed it wise to keep with Little Smoke and Ath-po-goh. He tried to do so, but the pony he rode determined otherwise. It was the most unruly fellow of the lot stolen from the Crows, and he knew all about buffaloes. He knew that it was his duty to chase the first he saw, and he chased him without Bert's permission, while Little Smoke and his brother rode after a squad of three or four in another direction.

Bert's buffalo-hunt.

In a moment, Bert found himself riding alongside a huge, lumbering bull-bison. He felt as if his arrows were like so many pins, and as if his lance were a humbug.

"I must shoot," he said, as he drew an arrow to the head and let it fly. It went deep into the side of the bison, and the wounded monster wheeled and charged so quickly that the Crow pony was only just quick enough in dodging. But for Bert's recent practice, that sudden swerve would have thrown him; but he stuck to his pony and made a thrust with his lance. He did but prod the bull in the shoulder, and make him more furious.

"I'll let the pony do his own work," said Bert. "He knows how. If I can hit him with another arrow!"

There was much wheeling and dodging before he saw any hope of doing so, and again he only stung the angry, bellowing bull.

"He'll kill the pony yet," almost groaned Bert, as that fierce charge was narrowly missed; but the Crow pony had his wits about him, and his next swerve brought his rider again close to the side of the bison. In went another arrow, and Burnt Face would have said it was Bert's pure luck, for it struck

a vital part, and the bison reeled as if he were sick and did not pursue his tormentor at once.

"One more arrow and then I'll lance him!" shouted Bert, in a fierce rush of hunter's enthusiasm. Not until that moment had he been able to enter into the spirit of it, so sure had he felt of failing with Indian weapons.

It was more than one arrow, for the bull turned sulkily at bay after a brief gallop, but at last Bert actually succeeded in driving in his lance, just in the right place, behind the shoulder of the bull.

Down sank the mighty game and Bert shouted, "I've killed a buffalo!"

He felt that it was glory enough for one day, and, when he found that both Little Smoke and Ath-po-goh had done as well as he had, he discovered that he had imbibed a strong respect for a bow and arrows. They were pretty good weapons, and so was a lance with a long, sharp blade.

CHAPTER XXIX.

AMONG THE BLUE-COATS.

Bill Adams did not know whether or not any Indians were following him. All that he felt sure of was that he should not be satisfied until he could find some white men. So he rode right along, using first one of his horses and then the other, day after day. He knew it was a wide and uninhabited country, but he was very much surprised that he did not meet anybody at all.

One day, an hour or so before sunset, another surprise came to him. He rode out of a piece of woods and found himself at the top of a great slope with a level valley at the bottom of it, and mountains in all directions. Right in the middle of the valley was a row of log-huts, and near them was a line of tents, and over one of these, on a pole, floated the American flag.

"Hurrah!" shouted Bill. "I've got there. This here is one of them new cities that's coming. They've begun on it!"

The horse he was riding had to gallop, now, until he was reined in before a tall, lank man, who stood in the door of one of those log-huts. Over the door was stuck up half of a barrel-head, and on it was red-chalked the words "United States and Metropolitan Hotel." One name was not enough for such a tavern as that.

"What do you call this place?" asked Bill, excitedly.

"Stranger," said the hotel-keeper, "this was Plumbago City, but them there cavalry have come to break it up."

"Break it up!" exclaimed Bill.

"Yes, sir-ree. There can't be no city here till after there's a new treaty made with Red Cloud and Sitting Bull. I don't know what the name of it'll be then. Do ye want to take a sheer in it? You can dicker for some lots dog-cheap just now."

There was not a very long talk there, for Bill Adams wished to see the cavalry commander, and rode straight to headquarters. The orderly on duty reported him duly, and a tall, soldierly man came out to hear Bill's account of his adventures.

"Tell you what, Captain Benteen," said he, at the end of it, "that boy isn't killed. He is a prisoner.

I sha'n't be satisfied till something's done about it."

"There will be something done about it," said the captain. "Hope your mate got away. You and he deserved to lose your outfit. We're short of horses. You can turn over those two to the quartermaster. He'll give you a couple of ponies out of the corral. Do you know what band of Sioux you stole 'em from?"

"Captain," said Bill, with a very red face, "I didn't steal 'em; it was a kind of trade."

"Tell me all about it now. Don't you know they're cavalry-horses? They were stolen from Company A, of the Seventh, two months ago. Don't you see the brand?"

All in vain had Bill combed and curried, and plastered mud over the very faint "U. S." on the haunches of those horses. They were United States property, and must be given up. So he told all about their recapture, and was rewarded with—"You're the right kind of man to lose your scalp in this kind of country. You ought to be satisfied. I'll tell the quartermaster to give you four ponies anyhow. He doesn't know what to do with all he has on hand."

"I'll take 'em," said Bill, but somehow he was not satisfied.

Neither, at about the same time, was Uncle Jake Raynor. That was the third day since the red warrior appointed to lead him out of the land he had no business in had halted and motioned along a well-marked trail before them.

"Go," he said. "Fort Pierre that way. No come any more. Heap fool."

"Good-by," said Uncle Jake. "All right. Take present?"

"Ugh!" said the warrior, and Uncle Jake rummaged in his mule-pack till he brought out two good-looking bowie-knives. They were there for hunting uses or for trades, and now their unexpected use had come.

"Good friend," said Jake, as he gave one to the warrior. Chief good friend. That for him."

"Ugh!" exclaimed the delighted brave. "Chief remember Heap-Fool."

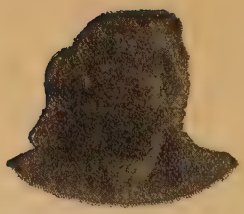
Then, with many words and earnest motions, did Uncle Jake explain that his "boy" was a prisoner among the Sioux, he knew not where, and that his new "friends" must help find him.

"Ugh!" was the last reply. "Find boy for Heap-

Fool. Tell where find. Heap-Fool bring heap pony, blanket, knife, gun. All right. Ugh! Bye!"

That was the parting with the Indian guide; and now, at the close of the third day afterward, Uncle Jake stood before a table in a large "headquarters" tent. Behind the table sat an officer with stars upon his shoulder-straps, who had listened attentively to the miner's long and very mournful story. It was Jake's turn to listen now, for the general said: "I haven't heard of any other squad of miners that had quite so little sense. Very sorry about the boy. When the council meets I'll see what can be done. If we succeed in making a treaty, we can get him easily; that is, if he is alive and a prisoner. You and your mate are to blame, and not the boy or the Ogalallahs. You can go now, Mr. Raynor."

Uncle Jake bowed his head and walked sorrowfully out of the big tent.



CHAPTER XXX.

THE CROW-BUTTE COUNCIL.

"What Ke-o-na-wagh say?" said Little Smoke to Bert Raynor, and the only reply was a deep-throated "Ugh!" which sounded almost like a sob.

They were standing on a bluff at the edge of the table-land which juts out along White River, south of Crow Butte, and spread out before them was the wide plain chosen for the great council. Below them, at no great distance, rode No-ton-thah and all the warriors of his band whose age and rank entitled them to attend the opening ceremonies of the council. They were arrayed in all the splendor of paint and feathers they could put on. With them went about a dozen of the more influential squaws, among whom was Rain-all-day. Mrs. Burnt Face rode beside her husband, and Na-da-wis had been permitted to attend her father and mother.

Beyond, at different places assigned to them by their head chiefs, arose whole villages of lodges, for

all the tribes concerned were largely represented. Beyond these, in orderly lines of perfect arrangement, were the white tents of the United States cavalry and infantry. In front of this camp were drawn up two full regiments of blue-coated horsemen, one regiment of riflemen on foot, and a battery of Gatling guns, besides two or three glittering brass field-pieces.

It was a grand scene, and Little Smoke did not know what to think of it. The question troubling him was one he did not utter.

There, on the plains, within easy reach of those pale-face braves, rode three times their number of red warriors, led by the greatest chiefs, in Little Smoke's undoubting belief, that ever wore a moccasin. Why did not Red Cloud, and Sitting Bull, and Crazy Horse, and the other heroes, lead on at once, wipe out the blue-coats, and destroy forever the power of the great enemy that threatened to take away Pah-sap-pa?

It was a question he kept to himself until that evening gave him an opportunity to ask it of Rain-all-day, and was answered: "Ugh! Blue-coats like grasshoppers. Come one day; come next day; keep on coming No use kill one swarm."

Just now all he could do was to stand still and

watch the very respectable swarm in front of the lines of tents.

Little Smoke gazed at them with one pair of eyes and Ke-o-na-wagh with another. It seemed to Bert Raynor that he was looking hundreds and hundreds of miles beyond the camps and clustered lodges, the batteries, the cavalry, and the clouds of painted horsemen. He could almost see how his home in Ohio must be looking, that bright, September morning, with his mother and father in the doorway, and his brother and sisters around them, as if waiting for him to come. He wondered if they knew where he now was, and there came a great ache at his heart when he thought how surely he would be set at liberty if the men in blue on the plain below him knew that he was up there on the bluff.

Some of them had been told that he might possibly be a prisoner somewhere among the many outlying bands of the Sioux, but not one of them dreamed of his being so very near. His heart began to beat more hopefully as he looked at them, and again he pictured to himself the doorway of the farm-house near Marietta.

His idea of the family group was mournfully wrong, for it was not in the doorway. All those of

whom he had been thinking were at that very hour gathered in the dining-room of the farm-house, listening while his father read a letter from Uncle Jake. Bert could not have imagined how they looked or what they said, for it was their first tidings of him, coming at the end of a long, dreadful anxiety about him.

"Dead, or a prisoner among the Indians!"

That was his mother's voice, and she could not say any more.

His father replied, "Jacob says he is going to attend the great Indian council, and see if he can get any news of him."

Then, he too, could not say any more for a long time, and the room seemed to grow dark, and the air was full of low sounds that did not get into the shape of words even after all who were there knelt down.

That was one picture Bert did not see, even in his mind's eye, and there was yet another.

Away at the left of the line of blue-coated infantry, a middle-aged man stood alone, holding the bridle of a pony from which he had just dismounted. He seemed to be utterly absorbed in gazing at the wheeling bands of Indian warriors, gay with lances and

feathers, and perfect in horsemanship, and he paid no manner of attention to anything nearer him. Every bit as absorbed as he was another white man who also rode upon a pony until the stern voice of a sentry said to him: "Halt! Citizens can not go beyond this line without a pass."

"You don't say! Well, I'll get down here and look on. Hullo!"

He had sprung to the ground while speaking, and his final exclamation went right into the face of the man who was holding the pony.

This man did not say "Hullo!" he only drew a hard, short breath, and his voice was husky when he replied: "Bill Adams! Is your scalp on your head yet?"

"Reckon so. I'm powerful glad you got through, Jake. I came here to see if I couldn't get some word about Bert."

"Bill, you're a right-down good fellow, at heart, if you wasn't so contrary."

"Jake Raynor, I'd bet on you, before any other man I ever did know. You're an out-and-out good fellow, if you wasn't so set in your way."

"Shake hands, Bill. You haven't heard anything?"

"Not a word about him. I've just got here. Hope the Government commissioners won't quarrel with the redskins."

"If they don't make a treaty, Bill, our chance is gone. There'll be a war."

They shook hands twice, and then each told the other the story of his journey out of the Black Hills country.

There was yet another picture that Bert Raynor could not see, although it was out there before him. It was too far away for him to get a clear idea of the great dignity of the council itself.

On one side were the United States commissioners, surrounded by distinguished men and by army officers in brilliant uniforms. On the other were the chiefs and warriors whose names were known from the frontier to the Rocky Mountains. Among them were some whose fame had gone over the whole world, as far as newspapers could carry the tales of their exploits. Noble-looking men were some of them, and some had terribly forbidding faces, full of cruelty.

All wore their "war leggings," fringed with tufts cut from the scalps they had taken. On one of these awful records were counted ninety-three tufts, and

upon another eighty-seven ; and some of these tokens told of Indian warfare, and some were brown, gray, red, while a few were long and soft and silky, causing a colder shudder than did the others.

Bert had only a far-away look at all that remarkable assembly. He did not hear the speeches, and some of these would have been a great astonishment to Little Smoke. What would he have thought if he could have heard pale-face chiefs actually offer to buy Pah-sah-pa ?

That is what they did. They wanted the Black Hills and all the Powder River country, and they wished to put the Ogalallahs on a "reservation" and make farmers of them.

No Sioux chief of any standing was willing to give up everything, and no Ogalallah "wanderer" was ready to settle on a reservation.

A large party, mostly younger warriors, opposed selling any land whatever, and Little Smoke would have sided with them.

A larger party, including the older chiefs, were ready to shock Rain-all-day and all who felt as she did. There were "bad lands" around Pah-sap-pa, so that it was hard to get into. It was full of manitous, so that it was not a good place to live in. They

were willing to sell it if they could get enough for it.

One price named was that the United States Government should support the entire Sioux nation all the year round for seven generations. Another price named was fifty millions of dollars. One chief was willing to come down to thirty millions, but the commissioners could offer only six millions. They had no idea of the value of manitous.

In the midst of the council a brave came to No-ton-thah with a message.

"Rain-all-day dream. Tell No-ton-thah hear manitou. Tell Ta-tan-ka-yo-tan-kah. Keep Pah-sap-pa. Kill bad Sioux. Kill pale-faces. Heap fight."

No-ton-thah was sitting upon the ground in dignified silence when the messenger delivered his errand, and beside him sat another dark form, even more startlingly painted and bedizened and with more scalp-locks on his leggings. In a few short, deep-throated sentences, the prophetic warning passed from chief to chief, and then Ta-tan-ka-yo-tan-kah sprang suddenly to his full height. He was as tall as No-ton-thah, and every movement of his lithe, powerful frame seemed to tell of the terrible strength which had made him victor in so many desperate en-

counters with the best warriors of the plains. While sitting, the expression of his face was almost good-humored, and its rugged, deep-lined muscles wore a loose, half-flabby appearance, such as is to be noted in the faces of caged lions in menageries, but it was not so now. A fierce, ferocious life flashed into them and made them rigid, cruel, while his beady, black eyes glittered with angry fire. He stood, for one moment, glancing rapidly around the assembly, and then his long right arm went out and his open hand motioned threateningly toward the group of white officials.

"No!" he exclaimed, in a tone that resembled suppressed thunder. "No! No sell Pah-sap-pa! Ta-tan-ka-yo-tan-kah say no!"

That was all; and, turning haughtily upon his heel, he strode out of the council; but the message of Rain-all-day had done its work. The manitou country was to be held firmly by the Ogalallahs.

That would have exactly suited the views of Little Smoke; but Bert Raynor sat on the bluff, and hoped for a treaty wide enough to include him.

As for Uncle Jake and Bill Adams, they argued the matter all day. Jake said there would be a treaty, and Bill said there would be an awful war.

"No! No sell Pah-sap-pa!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

BERT'S HOPE DEFERRED.

The great council lasted more than one day, and the strife grew bitter between the two opposing factions of the red men. But for the dog-soldier police and the blue-coated soldiers, there would have been a bloody tumult, and the bad advice of Rain-all-day would have been followed. All debate ended at last in a refusal to sell Pah-sap-pa, and the last great gathering of the Dakota tribes broke up without making a new treaty.

Before the end came there was a more free mingling of white men and red. Two of the former, as soon as the sentries permitted, began to push around among the Indians and ask questions about a boy they had lost. It was in the forenoon of the last day that one of them came to the other and said: "You was right, Bill. There won't be any treaty."

"Then it's good-by, Bert Raynor! Hold on, Jake,

I want to speak to that fellow. He looks like one of their squaw-men."

In another moment Bill Adams was talking eagerly to a sour-looking, powder-marked man, very near whom a half-grown Indian was standing and staring in all directions. Bill rapidly told the story of Bert Raynor and the shack, but before he could ask any questions the man turned to the Indian boy and said in the Sioux language: "Little Smoke, do you see that tall blue-coat? Go and look in his face. He is General Custer, the white war-chief who has struck the Ogalallahs."

There was a fierce flash in the boy's eyes, but he went at once, and the squaw-man turned again to Bill, saying: "He's out of hearing now. Your boy wasn't hurt. He's all safe with No-ton-thah's band of Ogalallahs. He'll be as good an Indian as I am one of these days. You may tell his mother he won't be scalped unless you or some other fool tries to get him away—"

Just at that moment the red men, thronging around them, broke into whoops and yells of angry confusion. The squaw-man exclaimed, "You get out of this quick, mister, while your chance is good!"

He put his finger on his lips warningly, and they saw what he meant.

"Come on, Jake," said Bill. "They'd kill him if they knew he'd told."

"He can tell us more than that—"

But the squaw-man slipped away through the crowd, and Bill replied, "Now, Jake, if you want 'em to massacre Bert right off, you go ahead."

Just then a stern-looking dog soldier put his hand on Uncle Jake's shoulder and pointed toward the army tents.

"Ugh!" he said, menacingly. "Pale-face heap fool. Go! Sioux knife out right away."

"No help for it, Bill," said Jake, as they started, "but I've got some news to send to his mother."

All the white boy's heart in poor Ke-o-na-wagh had grown heavier, hour by hour, since his first look at the army tents. He could not move hand or foot, or even use his tongue toward obtaining his freedom. Twice, when he ventured to beg Burnt Face to carry a message for him to any white man he might meet, he had been silenced almost angrily. Bert could not at all understand the squaw-man's bitterness, for he had not heard him when he looked at the bright array of cavalry and infantry, and muttered: "I was

a white man once, and a soldier, too. What am I now?"

Only a little while afterward Bert pleaded with him: "Couldn't word be sent to my mother? If she only knew I was alive."

"She'd as lief you'd be dead as have you grow up an Ogalallah," said Burnt Face, roughly, as he turned away, but there must have been a softer spot in him, for it was not long before he said to himself: "It wouldn't hurt her to know, and perhaps I will if the chance comes. But, then, if there's no treaty made, there won't be any use in talking about prisoners."

Nevertheless, he used the opportunity brought to him by Bill Adams.

That evening, when No-ton-thah and his warriors rode back to their camp, orders went out to move at sunrise next day.

"My last chance is gone," said Bert to Burnt Face, with a struggle not to burst out crying.

"You didn't have any to lose unless there had been a treaty. Tell you what, though, I won't answer any questions, but I saw your uncle and Bill Adams and told 'em to say to your mother you were safe and well."

"Did you? Thank you. Thank you. I'll do anything for you in all the world. She'll be so glad to hear I'm alive."

CHAPTER XXXII.

MORE WANDERING WITH THE OGALALLAHS.

THREE days after the great council broke up, Uncle Jake said to Bill Adams: "I just can't give him up, Bill. I'm going to stick around with the army till there's something done."

"That's what I'm going to do, Jake," said Bill. "We can team it and we can trade and dicker around and be ready for anything."

"We'll hear from him again," said Uncle Jake. "I've written to his folks, but I kind o' don't want to open any answer they send me."

His letter contained all he had learned from Burnt Face, and was as hopeful as he could make it. It reached the farm-house near Marietta when the family were all at dinner.

"Father! father!" exclaimed Mrs Raynor, as her husband read it aloud. "Bert isn't dead! I shall see him again! I know I shall!"

It seemed like good news after so much uncer

tainty, but she would not have expected to see Bert very soon if she could have talked with the officers of the army.

All the Indian bands went away from Crow Butte discontented. Before that, the "reservation" Indians had pretended to be peaceable, but the unruly part of them had gone out on "war-paths," nevertheless, and they felt twice as much like doing so now. Hundreds of them, Cheyennes as well as Sioux, left their reservations and went off to join the Ogalallahs, especially the bands under Sitting Bull—Ta-tan-ka-yo-tan-kah.

That chief was looked upon as a sort of hero who had taken in hand the work of avenging the wrongs of his people. He had made himself much dreaded by the pale-faces already, and he was very soon to win a yet more terrible name.

No-ton-thah's band was under Sitting Bull, but under him it was especially allied to the band of the great war-chief, Crazy Horse. It moved as he directed, after the council.

Day after day Bert Raynor learned more and more about Indians. He found that they had a very complete form of government all their own. They had laws and customs, too, and obeyed them pretty

well, and they had strong notions of justice. They were proud of being Indians, and they loved their hunting-grounds and they loved their way of living.

Ke-o-na-wagh was now looked upon less as a prisoner than as a member of the family of Rain-all-day. There was a good side to that, but there was also a bad side, for, if he or any other member of her family, or any member of any other Sioux family, should be so wicked as to try and leave his people and become a pale-face, he would surely be killed. Even Little Smoke or Ath-poh-goh would have been killed if either of them had played runaway.

There was no danger that Bert or his adopted cousins would offend that law. Bert knew that he was helpless; Ath-poh-goh did not think at all; and Little Smoke was prouder than ever of being an Ogalallah. He felt sure that he was not to lose Pah-sap-pa, and he was in high spirits. He had questions about what he had seen at Crow Butte to ask of Ke-o-na-wagh as they rode along, but there had been one thing done there which he only half told.

When Burnt Face sent Little Smoke to look at General Custer, he did not meet him again for nearly an hour, and did not guess in what manner the looking had been done.

The distinguished cavalry officer became suddenly aware that an Indian boy, a few paces in front of him, was staring at him with something like the expression of a young panther about to spring.

"Well, boy," said the general, smiling, "do you think you will remember me?"

"Ugh!" exclaimed Little Smoke, taken entirely by surprise. "Look in face of pale-face war-chief. Little Smoke kill him some day. Can't have Pah-sap-pa."

"Do you hear that, colonel?" said Custer to an officer near him.

"That's the way they feel about it—Run away, boy. Take that."

The silver dollar he tossed Little Smoke was caught, skillfully enough and kept, but it did not change his determination concerning what he would do to pale-face warriors as soon as he should be old enough to go out after them.

When he afterward showed the dollar to Ke-o-na-wagh he tried hard to get an idea about the "millions" which had been offered for Pah-sap-pa. When they came to a place where there was rubbish enough they both dismounted, and Bert made a heap of brush and grass and dry leaves, trying to show how large a

pile would be made by fifty millions of such dollars. Little Smoke opened his eyes wide in astonishment.

"Ugh!" he said. "Heap buy pony, gun, blanket. Make Ogalallah rich."

Then, after a moment of silence he shook his head and added: "No want 'em. No sell Pah-sap-pa. All pale-face keep out of Sioux hunting-grounds."

That was the feeling of all the Ogalallahs and of all the young "patriots" of other Sioux bands, and through the autumn months they behaved accordingly. The main body of each band withdrew to safe distances, while small parties of braves went out, in many directions, to carry on such a war as accorded with their idea of the right way of dealing out justice to the pale-faces.

While the war-parties went on their several expeditions, the hunting parties worked busily laying in provisions for winter, and the sagacious chiefs traded buffalo-skins for all the cartridges they could get hold of.

"I don't know about myself, exactly," was a thought which came to Bert Raynor one day. "I look almost like an Indian, and I talk Sioux better every day, and I kind o' half-way feel like an Indian. I'm just enjoying myself."

The charm of wild life is very strong, and no wonder it came to him. The autumn weather was beautiful, and there was any amount of magnificent scenery. He was all a-glow with health, and even his memories of home could not make him unhappy in the daytime. Sometimes he felt pretty badly when he lay awake at night, but even then he could help the matter by imagining himself at home or among the boys he knew, telling wonderful stories of his captivity.

Little Smoke was living the life he was born into and had nothing to make him unhappy, except that he had hung around one hollow tree for hours and had talked into the hollow without any manitou sending him back a syllable. He ought to have starved himself for a week and danced himself tired out and been dreadfully tortured in order to imitate the warriors Rain-all-day talked about who had seen manitous, but he was yet too young for that.

Ath-poh-goh was not unhappy, for he knew he was growing handsome. He had his troubles, however, for the dog soldiers had forbidden his doing any more serenading. They told him he was only a lazy boy who had not even stolen one pony. He was a nobody.

Rain-all-day had said as much, and so had Te-o-na-wish and Mrs. Burnt Face, while Na-da-wis refused even to speak to him.

Ke-o-na-wagh found that, although he had now risen to be a pretty complete Ogalallah, and although all the rest of his tribe hated the pale-faces, they were quite ready to ask questions about the pale-face country. They wanted to know about the great villages and the things in them, and the big salt-water and the wind-canoes and the steam-canoes. They hardly meant to be unkind when they were compelled to remark about Bert's answer, "Ke-o-na-wagh heap lie."

Little Smoke, for instance, had seen a railway train on the Pacific Railroad, and he had seen field-pieces at Crow Butte, but he refused to believe in an iron gun so big that No-ton-thah might crawl into it until you could not see his moccasins.

"Ugh!" he said. "Gun go off. Where No-ton-thah go?"

"Ride long time," said Bert; "find head of great chief in tree."

Orders from Crazy Horse came to No-ton-thah at one hunting-camp, which sent him on a long march toward the band's winter quarters, on Little Powder

River. It was across a rough country, full of deep ravines and chasms. They were going along the side of one of these, the second day, when Bert heard loud shouting along the straggling, long line. Then the head of the line began to vanish. "Hullo!" said Bert, "they're all running into the ravine. I don't see anybody to run away from."

It was a hasty rush, nevertheless. Warriors and squaws, children and quadrupeds, all poured pell-mell down a pretty steep slope into the ravine, as if hiding from an enemy.

Just before Bert went into the ravine he saw the enemy coming. It was a great black cloud that seemed to be sweeping across the plain westward of them.

"What is it?" said he to Little Smoke.

"Bad medicine. Big wind manitou. Throw stones at Ogalallahs."

"It's a kind of thunder-gust," said Bert; but hardly were they in the ravine before he began to hear a loud, booming, roaring sound. That was followed by a strong gust of wind, and the darkness covered the sky and came down around them so that they could hardly see each other's faces.

"Something awful's coming!" said Bert, and at

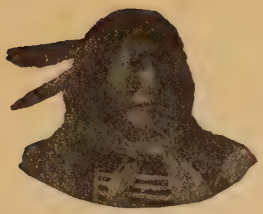
that moment the roar swept over them. With it was hurled along a tempest of sand and stones. The ravine was a great protection, but flying gravel, and even pebbles of some size, came dashing down, smiting human beings and beasts hard enough to draw blood, and surely drawing forth shouts and yells, neighing and braying and squealing.

"If we hadn't been out of the way of that sandstorm," said Burnt Face, as he cowered behind a pony, "we'd have lost half our stock."

"Half the band, too, I guess," said Bert.

"See that?" said Burnt Face, picking up one of the larger pebbles. "It lit close to me. 'Twouldn't take more'n a thousand like it to club the life out of a fellow."

The storm swept by. The bruised and dusty band crept out of the ravine and pushed on to the bank of the Little Powder River. The lodges were all set up with special care, to stay a long time, and Bert saw that he might be very sure of learning how the wandering Sioux lived during cold weather, for he was to spend that winter at least as one of them.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE SIOUX WINTER CAMP.

THAT's what the placer nuggets did Bill," said Uncle Jake. "What do you think of that for an outfit? We can team it for the quartermaster all winter long."

"Good pay, too," said Bill, as he stared at the wagons and the six-mule team before them. "But look a-here, Jake. That there middle span didn't come out of any placer. Them six ponies of mine kind o' b'iled down into them two mules."

"That's why I stuck 'em into the middle of the team," said Uncle Jake. "They're contrary, like another feller I know."

Bill laughed good-naturedly, but he was thinking of something else, for he replied: "Did you hear about the troops moving? There'll be expeditions before spring."

"I'm with 'em, if they go," said Uncle Jake. "I

sha'n't rest in any camp if there's a chance to do something about Bert."

"No more will I," said Bill, "but he won't suffer any more in a good lodge than a redskin does. He'll harden to it."

"Of course he will," said Uncle Jake, "but he won't need any hardening, such fall weather as this is."

That was early in November, and, even at about the end of the month, Bert himself said to Burnt Face, in the winter-camp of No-ton-thah's band: "This is the prettiest kind of place. Mountains all around. What'll the ponies do for hay after snow comes?"

"That's what this valley was made for," said Burnt Face. "Storms land their snow on the east and west slopes of the mountains, so hardly any gets down here. I've seen new blue-grass here in January, and the snow wasn't six inches deep all that winter. An Indian pony can root for grass through any thin snow. He knows what bushes are good for him, too."

"They must half starve, though, in some hard winters," replied Bert.

"They always get pretty thin before spring.

Some winters the feed gives out and droves of 'em die."

"Indians too, sometimes. I've heard about that," said Bert.

"Not if they've laid up what they might, and if they didn't trust too much to winter hunting. None of Sitting Bull's people or Red Cloud's'll starve—not this winter."

"Seems to be a pretty safe sort of place, too," said Bert, for he had kept his ears open to all the rumors of trouble with the army.

"Regular hiding-place," said Burnt Face. "Specially after a good snow comes to pile drifts in the way of the cavalry and stop army wagons. The place where Crazy Horse has made his camp, down on Little Powder River, isn't half so safe as this is."

"It's only a day's good ride to get there," said Ke-o-na-wagh. "I'd like to see it."

"None of this crowd'll go in that direction just now," was the reply. "All our hunting's got to be done to the southerly, so as not to interfere."

Bert had questioned Little Smoke, somewhat, as to the way the cold weather was likely to be spent, and his mind was full of new ideas as to what could be done after the snow should come. Buffalo and

deer could be followed and found, sometimes better than in the summer. There were wolves and bears in the mountains. The great grizzlies and cinnamon bears were pretty sure to be heard from before spring, and hunting them was sport and fame for any warrior. Even in very cold weather there was fishing to be had, through air-holes in the ice. Besides all these resources, bow and arrows were just the things to go after rabbits with, and every dog in camp understood that business perfectly.

Bert knew that it would be of no use to ask for a rifle to kill bears with, but he had another thought in his mind just now.

"It's getting colder," said he to Burnt Face, "and Rain-all-day has only handed me out my undershirt and vest."

"That's enough, just now. You've got to toughen as the weather comes. Tell you what, though. My wife has tanned every deer-skin you've fetched in. Reckon she likes you better'n I thought. I'll lend you a heavy needle. You can take them deer-skins and play tailor. Make yourself some leggings and anything else. Kill a 'coon or a 'possum, and rig a hat for yourself. That's what I used to do, till I struck an otter and did better."

"I'll just do it," exclaimed Bert. "I won't freeze this winter."

"Mind you don't spile a skin," said Burnt Face. "Most likely you will."

It was a good caution, but Bert did not spoil anything. He had seen tailors cut out things, and he surprised himself and everybody else by the skill he showed in imitating all he remembered of their work. In a very few days he had a first-rate hunting-shirt and a new pair of leggings. Both were loosely cut, but they pleased Rain-all-day so much that she at once went to her own pack and brought out his boots.

"Ke-o-na-wagh moccasin," she said, but it was three days before he could get his feet once more accustomed to them.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LITTLE SMOKE'S FIRST BATTLE.

THE first weeks of December were pleasant and autumn-like, but then a surprise came to Ke-o-na-wagh. He saw great whirls of snow among the mountains. Heavily laden blasts poured over the ridges and down the slopes, but not any large amount of snow lodged in the protected valley. It was well for the ponies, but it was new to Bert.

That night was bitterly cold, and it was another surprise to find how comfortable a mere lodge might be with only one thickness of bison-hide to keep out the frost. Bert had worked industriously, and his 'coon-skin cap and his mittens were as good as any others in the camp. He wore them when he went out after the next astonishing event.

The weather was severe for days after the great storm, but then came a thaw, followed by freezing, and a crust was made which would almost bear a pony in some places.

Such a crust seemed made for hunting, and Burnt Face took Ke-o-na-wagh and Little Smoke with him to draw the sledge on which he meant to bring home his game. They were wild to go, and went armed for anything which might fall to their share. He led them out of the valley by what had been a very deep ravine, and in the middle of it stood a tall pine-tree. Bert leaned against a withered branch of it and asked, "How deep do you s'pose the snow is, right here?"

"Not very deep," said Burnt Face. "Not more'n forty feet, I reckon. It gets drifted in real deep, though, in some of the passes. Wait till spring, and you'll know what it can do when it melts."

The boys had two deer to drag home on the sled that day, but Burnt Face had killed them with his rifle, and there had been no bow-and-arrow work. Ke-o-na-wagh looked at the deer, and understood better why Indians do not often starve in winter if they make their camp in a good game country.

It took four of No-ton-thah's braves to drag home a grizzly that was killed that day, in single fight, by a young warrior who was just beginning to distinguish himself. Four more carried home the warrior himself, and it was nearly a month before he left his

lodge again. He was dreadfully scratched up, and Burnt Face doctored him with strips of the sticking-plaster captured from Uncle Jake's baggage.

Just after that there came from the camp of Crazy Horse a messenger with news full of excitement, but that caused no surprise whatever. He brought a message sent out by the United States Government to the band of Sitting Bull and "all other wild and lawless bands" that they must come in and settle on the "reservations" before the end of January, or they would be regarded as "hostiles," and would so be treated by the military forces.

All the warriors and squaws and the young people of No-ton-thah's band made fun of that message. They were already at war with the pale-faces, and meant to remain at war, until spring at least. They believed that they were safe behind their forests and mountains and wide plains and deep snows. They also learned from the messenger that Sitting Bull had sent this message back to the general in command of the forces: "Come on. You need not bring any guides. You can find me easily. I will not run away."

It was not the first time that the Ogalallahs had been threatened with severe consequences in case

they should continue to be "wanderers," and they were in no manner of trouble about it. Little Smoke said to Ke-o-na-wagh: "Pale-face chief want Pah-sap-pa. Can't have. Want Ogalallah turn squaw, hoe corn, chop wood. Ugh! Pale-face lose hair."

He could look as fierce at such times as any other Indian that Bert had ever seen, and he seemed to expect entire sympathy from his adopted cousin or brother, whichever Ke-o-na-wagh might consider himself.

So Sitting Bull and all his people laughed at the United States army, and had no idea that any blue-coats would really come to "treat them as hostiles," in spite of the cold weather. They made more and more fun of it all, as week after week went by, and the hunting and fishing continued as usual.

In the band of No-ton-thah there was nothing at all like privation, and Ke-o-na-wagh himself had become well toughened to such minor hardships as belonged to winter life in a skin lodge. Early in March, however, supplies of ammunition and of some other things began to run short. Large stores of all had been gathered in the camp of Crazy Horse, twenty miles away, on Little Powder River, and No-ton-thah decided to send a train of ponies, squaws,

boys, and young braves, to bring home the share he was entitled to.

It may be that Rain-all-day, and the fact that she was a "medicine-woman" to be consulted by even a chief, had something to do with the other fact that she and her family made part of the expedition. It was no great affair, for No-ton-thah's warriors had been going and coming to and from the camp of Crazy Horse all winter long.

The Sioux chief had selected a spot peculiarly difficult of assault, protected by bluffs and ravines on the land side and by the swift, half-frozen river on the other.

Little Smoke was a proud boy when he stood on the bluff above and pointed at the great winter village. "Ke-o-na-wagh see? Blue-coat look and run away."

Bert was counting the lodges, and said nothing until he had finished. "One hundred and ten," he exclaimed, "and what a drove of ponies and mules and horses! It is almost like a town."

"Ugh! Heap town," said Little Smoke, for he had been trying to think up that word, and just then Burnt Face shouted to them: "Come along! It's getting late."

The rest of that day was a sort of sight-seeing to Ke-o-na-wagh and Little Smoke, while No-ton-thah himself and the squad of braves who came with him attended to the supplies and took counsel with their great leader.

"What Rain-all-day say?" asked Crazy Horse of No-ton-thah. "Old medicine-squaw have dreams?"

"Ugh! Dream heap bad. Say blue-coat come!"

Whether or not her apprehensions had caused her to have bad dreams, there was no clearer head among them all than that of Rain-all-day.

At that very hour a strong force of United States cavalry was steadily pushing along across the snow, and had almost reached the spot where it was to camp for the night, only a few miles away. It had needed many extra wagons to carry its supplies for men and animals, and among these were two whose drivers had brought their six-mule teams abreast of each other on a frozen level.

"Well, Bill," said one, "this here is pretty cold work, but they say we haven't far to go now."

"Reckon not. Haven't seen any Indians. Guess it'll be a surprise party to them. Jake, if Bert's there, he's going to have a chance."

"He's in that crowd somewhere," said Uncle Jake, and the look on his face would have been just as anxious if he had known what was coming.

In spite of the gloomy warning of Rain-all-day, Crazy Horse had no scouts or pickets out to bring him notice of danger. At about nine o'clock the next morning all No-ton-thah's pack ponies were loaded and had been led out of the village upon the bluff. The ponies which were to be ridden were gathered in the edge of the village, and Ke-o-na-wagh, already mounted, was in charge of them. The chief and his warriors and the rest of the party were yet scattered around, here and there, among the lodges over the broad level on the river-bank.

Suddenly there was a chorus of shrill whoops at the lower end of the village, followed quickly by bugle-notes, and then by a sharp cracking of rifle-shots that echoed among the bluffs. Bert's heart leaped within him as he wheeled and saw one line of blue-coated horsemen sweeping around the great drove of ponies on the river-bank, while another came thundering down upon the village itself. Rescue was close at hand, suddenly, unexpectedly.

"Oh, if I can reach the cavalry!" he exclaimed,

The [illegible] and [illegible] kind of Little Kwaku — too much for him

as he set off toward the village, followed by his ponies.

The rattling fire grew hotter as the surprised Sioux warriors sprang to arms. The squaws and children were running pell-mell toward the bluffs.

"I can break through!" shouted Bert, as he rode into the village, and he never thought of any danger from random bullets, but only of liberty and home. Suddenly a voice from the ground a little beyond him called eagerly: "Ke-o-na-wagh! Little Smoke!"

There he lay, the bright young Ogalallah. He had been standing still and whooping at the cavalry with all his might, when a stray shot struck him on the leg and brought him down.

There was a terrible struggle in Bert's mind for a moment. The bugle at the lower end of the village seemed to say: "We have come for you. Ride on!" But the pleading face and outstretched hand of Little Smoke were too much for him. In another moment he was kneeling beside his friend. He cut away the torn legging, and saw that the ball had made only a deep and ragged-flesh wound. Near by lay a blanket, thrown away by some squaw in her fright. Strips quickly torn from it were bound upon the hurt to stanch the blood.

"Ke-o-na-wagh! Ogalallah boy!" almost shouted Little Smoke, as he was lifted astride of a pony.

Bert seized again the bridle of his own, and was looking hungrily toward the advancing line of the cavalry, when Little Smoke pointed at a confused group not far away. "No-ton-thah there!" he said. "Rain-all-day there! Te-o-na-wish! Burnt Face! All want pony."

The bright hope of liberty vanished like a dream. Bert saw that his opportunity for escape had gone while he was caring for Little Smoke. He knew that any movement he might make toward the cavalry would be stopped by bullet, arrow, and knife. It was a bitter disappointment, but there was no help for it.

"Wait here," he said to Little Smoke. Then he hastily gathered the loose ponies and darted forward with them, loudly shouting the name of his own chief.

Shrill was the war-whoop of No-ton-thah as he sprang to the back of one of the ponies, but Rain-all-day mounted sullenly, pouring forth her wrath at all pale-faces. Na-da-wis and the squaws were on their ponies in a moment, and Burnt Face said to

Bert: "Come on, now, Ke-o-na-wagh. Where is Little Smoke? Where is Ath-po-goh?"

"Little Smoke is hurt in the leg, but I've got him. There he is. Ath-poh-goh ran away."

"Ke-o-na-wagh Ogalallah," said Na-da-wis and Rain-all-day, at the same moment, and No-ton-thah turned from firing a last shot at the cavalry to nod approvingly and remark: "Ke-o-na-wagh heart all right. Save scalp. Ugh!"

Away they rode, and in a few minutes more there were no Indians left in the village. No-ton-thah and his braves were with those of Crazy Horse, among the rocks, but the rest of his party were with the pack-ponies on the bluff. Here they could safely look down and see what the pale-faces were doing. The rifles were busily at work on both sides, but it was all "long-range firing," and did very little harm. Lodge after lodge was set on fire by the cavalry, and the flames leaped up fast and furiously. The great drove of ponies, horses, and mules, belonging to the band of Crazy Horse, was already on its way down the valley, guided by a cavalry escort.

The heaped-up supplies provided by the foresight of Red Cloud and Sitting Bull were terribly diminished, that bitter cold winter day, and it was well for

No-ton-thah's band that their share had been withdrawn in time, and was now going home on pony-back.

Burnt Face was with the fighting braves, but Rain-all-day was all the commander needed by the party on the bluff. She lingered awhile, gazing and muttering, and Bert was glad of it, for he also wanted to wait and see. It grew more and more terribly hard for him to ride away out of sight of the blue uniforms, and out of hearing of the distant bugle-notes. It was but a little while, however, before a cavalry re-enforcement arrived, and just then Rain-all-day turned to Bert and said: "Ugh! Sioux brave very mad. Ke-o-na-wagh not safe here. All ride fast."

It was hard riding homeward for poor Little Smoke, but it had to be endured. He bore it heroically, without one complaint or cry of pain. Ath-po-goh had more to say, for he was compelled to answer bitter taunts from Rain-all-day and the other squaws. He had left his own wounded brother to be brought away by Ke-o-na-wagh.

The whole band knew the story before night, and were ready to treat both him and Bert accordingly, but it was nearly five hours of riding before Little

Smoke could be lifted from his pony and carried into his grandmother's lodge.

There were no thermometers among the Ogalallahs, and none of them knew, as did the cavalry, that the quicksilver marked thirty degrees below zero that day. The smitten band of Crazy Horse had a sadder measure of the frost, for they spent that night among the bluffs and ravines, without any shelter and with little covering. Not all of them were alive in the morning.

The cavalry retreated after this daring dash, but the very cold made them careless concerning pursuit, and Crazy Horse recovered his drove of ponies the very next night. Only four of the cavalrymen were killed and six wounded.

"Jake," said Bill Adams, "this here's been an awful blow to the redskins. They'll make peace now."

"No they won't," said Jake. "It'll make 'em wild mad, and they may massacre all their white prisoners. Bert's chances ain't so good as they were."

"Yes, they are. They wouldn't hurt him. The cavalry have just done the right thing. Took some of the nonsense out of 'em. They'll be will-

ing to make a new treaty next time they get a chance."

"You wait and see," said Uncle Jake. "What burns me is that we've got to go back without Bert."

The temper of the Ogalallahs could have been best understood by a man right in among them. It would have been a perilous time for Bert Raynor but for his conduct during the attack on the village. Nobody knew of his first dash to join the pale-faces. He had saved Little Smoke at the risk of his life, and had brought ponies to his chief at the right moment. He had rendered as much service as if he had been a grown-up Sioux brave. Nevertheless, it was true, as Burnt Face said to him: "You did the right thing; but their blood is up, and your life isn't safe anywhere but among your own band."

It was nearly the end of the "cold snap" when the village of Crazy Horse was destroyed. The warm spring weather came early after that. The deep snows on the mountains melted fast. The torrents came pouring down the ravines. The swollen rivers and the deep mud of the plains checked all army movements for weeks and weeks.

Bert saw among the gorges such bursts and plunges of angry water as he had never seen before,

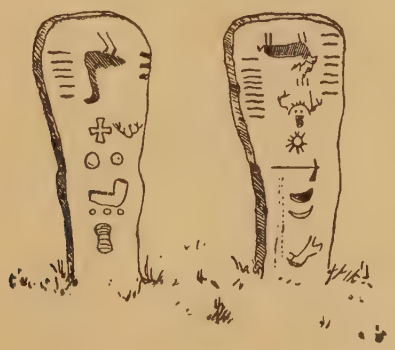
and he made up his mind that early spring was the most comfortless time of the whole year in an Indian village.

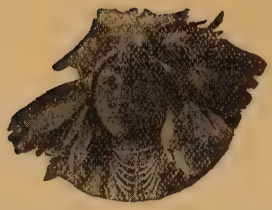
Little Smoke's wound healed fast, and he hobbled out of Rain-all-day's lodge prouder of that scar on his leg than any other part of him.

He and Ke-o-na-wagh knew, and so did No-ton-thah and Sitting Bull and Red Cloud himself, that Rain-all-day had reported another "bad-medicine dream."

"Grass grow tall," she said, "then blue-coat come again."

That was precisely what the generals commanding the army were saying, without having any medicine-squaw to dream bad dreams for them.





CHAPTER XXXV.

THE PRICE PAID FOR PAH-SAP-PA.

Red Cloud and Sitting Bull had a great many "dreams" before summer came. Nearly all of those dreams rode ponies, although some came on excellent horses borrowed from cavalry corrals. They were Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahoes, but most of the Crows were dreaming against their old Dakota enemies. At all events, every movement of the army was reported to the Ogalallah leaders. The latter made their preparations as rapidly and thoroughly as did the army commanders, and all the boys of No-ton-thah's band knew that a great war-time was at hand.

Those were great days for Little Smoke. Tales were brought to him of many small collisions between the braves of his nation and the pale-faces. Feats of cunning and of daring were reported which equaled some of the best stories of Rain-all-day.

Ke-o-na-wagh also heard the accounts of what was going on, and the eyes around him were very keen

and jealously patriotic. They did not fail to see that no enthusiasm was aroused in him by the deeds of the most distinguished Ogalallah warriors. Remarks were made about him, and they came to the ears of Burnt Face.

The squaw-man was compelled to do some thinking, and he said to himself: "I'm no white man, any more, but somehow I can't take kindly to shooting white men or seeing 'em scalped or tortured. Maybe I'll have to do it before long. About Bert Raynor! Well, he's safe among No-ton-thah's band just now, but I reckon he wouldn't be just after any big fight."

Little Smoke defended his friend, and when Na-da-wis said something against him he put her in mind how Ke-o-na-wagh had brought her a pony through a storm of bullets, to carry her out of the winter fight at the village of Crazy Horse.

No-ton-thah's band joined that of Sitting Bull before summer, and all the strength of the Ogalallahs was gathered on the bank of the Little Big Horn River. There were nearly three thousand warriors of all sorts. Councils were held with solemn dignity, and there were war-dances and "medicine-dances," and a vast amount of war-talk and of preparation for battle. There were many "squaw-men,"

and they made the force under Sitting Bull more dangerous than did the same number of red warriors of any tribe or band.

At last, one pleasant day in June, two messengers came galloping into the camp of Sitting Bull. One brought news of a great fight on Rosebud River, and boasted that an army of blue-coats had been contended with all day and had been badly beaten. The white officers who reported that fight took a different view of it, but the fighting spirit of Sitting Bull's warriors grew red hot over it.

The second messenger brought even more exciting news, for he reported that a strong column of cavalry was rapidly advancing to attack that very camp on the Little Big Horn.

Little Smoke brought the news to Ke-o-na-wagh, and was fiercely discontented because he was too young to be permitted to ride out and help kill cavalry.

Bert could hardly have told whether his heart was growing heavier or lighter till Burnt Face called him aside and said to him: "You've got to look sharp, my boy, or you'll get knocked on the head. I don't like that. I'd almost rather you'd get away. Do just as I tell you now. Rig up to-morrow so a

feller'd have to look twice to know you wasn't all Indian. Take that brown mustang of mine, and, if any chance comes, ride for your life. There's going to be a big battle. Wait till it's well a-going. Choose your time, and then ride away around behind all the fighting. Ride back along the army trail and don't stop. It's about the only show you've got left."

"I'll take it!"exclaimed Bert, and in a moment his spirits began to rise. He had almost changed from a boy into a man during his year among the Ogalallahs, and, now that an hour of trial had come, he was ready to act like a man.

Nevertheless, he looked like an Indian boy next morning, and nobody paid him any attention. He had carefully painted his bare skin with powder, and charcoal, and ochre, while buckskin leggings had long since taken the place of his worn-out trousers. He carried a lance and bow and arrows, and Burnt Face gave him back his revolver, telling him to keep it covered, so it should not be taken from him.

The camp was in an uproar at an early hour, but before long it was deserted by all but the squaws, the children and the dogs, for every warrior had gone out to meet and fight the cavalry.

Rain-all-day did not come out of her lodge until

it was almost noon, and a superstitious whisper went around that there was some mysterious "medicine" reason for it.

Ke-o-na-wagh feverishly watched and waited for some opportunity to separate himself from the other boys, and get away from the camp unseen. At last he mounted the swift brown mustang; but Little Smoke was as excited as he, although for other causes, and instantly sprang upon his best Crow pony. It was nearly noon, and just then the gaunt, sombre old squaw came hurriedly out of her lodge. She was muttering to herself, and her black eyes were glittering brightly. She at once said to the two boys: "Little Smoke! Ke-o-na-wagh! Ugh! Ride across river. Find No-ton-thah. Say Rain-all-day have dream. No-ton-thah tell Ta-tan-ka-yo-tan-kah not kill great pale-face chief. Not kill prisoner. Not lose Pah-sap-pa."

It was the message of a very wise old squaw, and it gave the boys something with which to answer the dog soldiers who were guarding the ford, and so to be permitted to cross the river.

Sounds of a distant battle came to their ears as they rode on, and they saw many squads of warriors, but it seemed as if they were never to find their own

chief, until a brave of whom they asked directions pointed out a hill on the right and said: "Ugh! No-ton-thah there. Ta-tan-ko-yo-tan-kah there."

A hard gallop brought them to the summit of the hill, only to find that all others had left it. They gained, however, a clear view of the level ground to the northward, and on it was something wonderful and terrible to see.

Across the open plain came galloping a number of Indian warriors, as if fleeing from an enemy. Behind them dashed gallantly onward line after line of blue-uniformed horsemen, all in ignorance of the trap they were being enticed into. It could be plainly seen from the hill what overpowering swarms were waiting to receive them.

"Ugh!" exclaimed Little Smoke, triumphantly. "Ta-tan-ka-yo-tan-kah heap wise. Blue-coat all die."

Bert Raynor held his breath, for even at that moment the rush of the wild riders began, the fleeing braves wheeled back, and all closed swiftly upon the doomed soldiery. They seemed to sweep like a wave over the first line of blue and it disappeared. A whole company of cavalry had been crushed in a few minutes.

On went the surging tide of savage war, the

whoops, the yells, the crashing rattle of rifles, and of carbines and revolvers, while the two boys sat upon their horses unable to speak for very excitement.

In fifty minutes from the moment when the trap of Sitting Bull was sprung, his warriors were the only living men upon that plain!

"Ugh!" said Little Smoke, "blue-coat all gone."

He seemed impressed by a fact so tremendous, and turned an awe-struck, earnest look upon the face of his companion, just as Bert held out his hand to him and said, "Good-bye, Little Smoke!"

"What for say good-by? Where Ke-o-na-wagh go?"

"Ke-o-na-wagh go to his own people. Not Ogalallah. White. Love Little Smoke. Good-by. Keep Pah-sap-pa."

"Ugh!" said Little Smoke, for a keen struggle was going on within him as to what might be his duty. Then gratitude came bubbling warmly up in his very simple heart, and he remembered how his friend had rescued him in the village of Crazy Horse.

"Ke-o-na-wagh all right," he said, decidedly. "Sioux brave hot mad. Ke-o-na-wagh not lose hair. Ride fast. Find more blue-coat. Not find hot mad Ogalallah. Go! Good-by!"

They shook hands very hard, but there was no time to lose, and Ke-o-na-wagh rode rapidly away. He knew that another body of troops was close at hand, and he followed as well as he could the directions he had received from Burnt Face. He rode for about an hour in safety, and then he began to hear what seemed the roar of yet another battle, and so it was. He soon reached a place from which he could see the men he had hoped to join, penned up among the trees and gullies, surrounded by four times their number of Sioux warriors and fighting for life.

He had witnessed the destruction of General Custer and his command, and here were Major Reno and his men; and poor Ke-o-na-wagh said to himself, "My life doesn't seem to be worth much, no matter where I go."

He found a deep ravine to hide his horse in, and then a place among some bushes from which he could watch the progress of that desperate struggle. All the remaining daylight it went on and into the hours of darkness, only slackening then to begin with the dawn of the next day.

Hungry and weary and sick at heart, Bert Raynor waited in his covert. He seemed to remember everything he had ever seen or heard, and the most

wonderful of all appeared to be the fact that he was there among the bushes, with nothing on him but paint and leggings.

All day long the fight continued, and was even more hotly contested than on the previous day. Early in the afternoon the Indians set fire to the grass in every direction.

"Now," said Bert, "they mean to rush in under cover of the smoke."

So thought the army officers, but they and Bert were mistaken. The messages of Rain-all-day had reached Sitting Bull, for Little Smoke had persisted in doing his duty. The sagacious chief saw its meaning. He had killed blue-coats enough, if not too many, and he had lost as many braves as he could spare. Before sunset he retreated, hidden by the dark curtain that arose from the burning grass. The smoke also made it safe for Bert to go for his pony but even then he did not dare to go too near the watchful sentries of the cavalry. He watched closely enough to know that during the night they moved their camp to be nearer water, for they were suffering terribly from thirst.

It was a mournful camp and full of wounded men. Early the next morning it received two very impor-

tant arrivals. From the northward marched in a fresh and strong column of troops, and with them came safety. From the southward came riding a solitary, half-naked, rudely painted Ogalallah boy. He was haggard and weary-looking, but there was a strange expression of joy upon his face. In the common excitement no attention was paid to him until he had ridden close to the spot where the commanding officers were conversing. One of them suddenly exclaimed: "Hullo! What's that young wolf doing here?—Orderly, clear him out."

Before the soldier spoken to could move one step, a boyish voice with an agitated quaver of gladness in it replied: "My name is Albert Raynor, and my home is near Marietta, Ohio. I've got away from the Indians."

"Hurrah!" shouted a confused chorus from the men who heard, but the officer at once responded: "You're just the fellow I want to see. Tell me all you know about the redskins right away."

There was enough to tell and it was of value, but it was not easy to believe the account he gave of the fate of Custer's command. When all had been heard, the general said, slowly: "We will go and see how that is—Orderly, take him to the quar-

termaster and tell him to see that the boy is cared for."

Away went Bert with the orderly, and they were riding past a line of wagons, when the soldier was startled by a sort of choking shout from his young charge: "Uncle Jake! Bill Adams! Here I am. It's Bert! I've got away from 'em!"

"Found your folks!" exclaimed the astonished orderly, as two bearded teamsters jumped from their wagons.

In a minute more the crowd of men who came running up to know what was the matter heard Bill Adams remarking: "Jake Raynor, you old galoot, what are you a-blubbering for? So am I, bless my soul!"

"Bill! Bill!" shouted Uncle Jake. "Go and get some soap and hunt for a shirt. Don't you say a word. His mother wouldn't know him."

Perhaps not, but it was worth while to see how many rough-looking men wanted to have a share in turning Bert Raynor back into an Ohio boy. The tallest teamster among them brought him a pair of trousers, and the fattest man brought him a vest. Some swift tailoring had to be done before

The price of Pah-sap-pa.

Bert could be rigged out, and while it was going on he ate and talked.

"It'll be a big yarn for you to tell when you get home," said Bill Adams, "but it's just awful to think of Custer and his men!"

At about that hour a group of very different people was gathered at one point of the field of battle. It was where the brave cavalry commander himself had fallen. There were several Sioux warriors and a boy, and one tall, old squaw. On the ground before them lay the general, and even the Ogalallahs had respected him too much to mar him in their customary way.

"What Rain-all-day say now?" asked the boy.

"Little Smoke look hard. See dead pale-face war-chief?"

All the warriors turned to hear what she might say about so solemn a matter, and she added: "No-ton-thah look. Ta-tan-ka-yo-tan-kah see. Pah-sap-pa gone. All price paid. Pale-faces not pay any more."

The clear-headed medicine-squaw was right. The war which followed was long and bloody, but the end was sure from the beginning. When this at last came a new treaty was made, and it was full of promises and gifts, but the brave men who fell with Cus-

ter on the Little Big Horn were really the price paid by the United States for the gold-mines and the fertile valleys of Pah-sap-pa.

Not many days after that, and just as the sun of a fair, warm Sunday was sinking behind a splendor of clouds, there was a very sad-faced gathering of older and younger people in the sitting-room of a farm-house near Marietta, Ohio. A broad-shouldered man, looking like a farmer, who sat by the table, had just opened wide a large book which lay there, but he had not begun to read. He looked up from it and round the little circle and he missed somebody.

"Call mother," he said, in a low, troubled, tone of voice. "Don't say any more about this awful news of Custer's men. It is killing her."

A few seconds before that, a portly; middle-aged woman, standing in the front doorway of the farm-house, had seemed to be so absorbed in an earnest, pleading, longing look toward the setting sun, that she could neither see nor hear anything near her. Her look grew more intense, and her lips moved tremulously. She did not hear a sound of quick, light feet, coming into the yard by the side-gate.

A pair of strong, eager young arms were suddenly thrown around her.

"Mother!"

"Bert!"

Inside the house the head of the man by the table came heavily down upon the book, and around him was a chorus of glad voices that exclaimed:

"Bert! Bert has come home!"

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